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NEW SCHOOLS FOR OLD

PORTER RURAL SCHOOL, OCTOBER 14, 1912, AND SOME OF THE LABOR THAT AIDED IN ITS RECONSTRUCTION

NEW SCHOOLS FOR OLD

The Regeneration of the Porter School

BY
EVELYN DEWEY

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To the Parents and Children of
PORTER
whose enthusiasm and neighborly spirit have built up
a Community

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PREFACE

THERE are many reasons why an account of Mrs. Harvey's work should be given to the public. What she has accomplished in Porter Community has a vital message for everyone who is interested in democracy. She has built up a community able to deal with its own problems and to work together for a constructive realization of the ideals of our country. She has done this by a method that cannot fail to be helpful to every teacher and social worker. It is a method which takes what is at hand as foundation and builds ideals and character qualities that make for success in any environment. The specific reaction upon agricultural problems is the most spectacular result of the work. The school set in a farming region has already produced from a typical stagnated district a group of people enthusiastic over farming as a profession and equipped to turn their enthusiasm into prosperous, permanent farm homes. Perhaps the most significant single thing about the work is that it has been accomplished with no greater resources than are

available in any isolated district. Mrs. Harvey is so convinced of the possibilities for new schools and a new farm life that lie in every district that she has remained in Porter in spite of great sacrifice and hardships. Mrs. Harvey and Miss Crecelius are pioneers in the real sense of the word. They have blazed a trail which is easy and satisfying to follow, but which has cost the best that they had to give.

Without the coöperation of the Bureau of Educational Experiments of New York City, Mrs. Harvey would not have been able to do all that she has to help other teachers and other communities. It is to be hoped that some method may still be found by which the Porter school of to-day may become a permanent institution and so help every backward district find itself.

New York City, April, 1919.

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CHAPTER I

THE COUNTRY LIFE MOVEMENT

With the growing realization that agricultural communities in this country are in grave danger of being left far behind in the march for social and economic progress, a number of movements have sprung up to spur on the farmer. City dwellers, realizing that a country can be only as strong as its agriculture, have sought to help with the cry of "Back to the Land", hereby hoping to serve the double purpose of increasing the body of farmers and decreasing the excess population of the cities. Any agitation which focusses attention on rural problems must contribute something; but the migration of untrained towns-people to the country and a new life with unfamiliar conditions cannot help constructively to change country life. More important, however, are the movements that originate in the country, be-

cause they attack directly the difficulties that face the farming population. Concrete attempts at reform have been aimed at two factors in country life: first, agricultural methods and second, education. They have been for the most part separate; agricultural colleges, foundations, and associations are preaching and teaching improved farm practices to adult farmers; normal schools and educators, shocked by the deplorable condition of the country schools, are trying to improve them. The two problems are but the two halves of the same, and hence the first problem cannot be successfully solved without the second. The fundamental relationship of the two can be shown in a discussion of another movement.

This is the Country Life movement; a movement not to solve any one phase of the rural problem, but so to improve conditions of living in the country as to raise standards of efficiency to the point where problems can be settled by a body of intelligent, prosperous and progressive farmers. Lack of knowledge of scientific methods of agriculture, and consequent poverty, are but one phase of country conditions that make for stagnation. Social conditions are the chief cause of the farmer's discontent, and as they improve, farm practices, health, and the rural

school will cease to be special problems. The familiar symptoms of agricultural stagnation are the steady movement of the rising generation from the country to the city and the great increase of tenant farmers. It is estimated that forty per cent of the farms in this country are now worked by renters. The causes back of these symptoms are what concern the workers in the Country Life Movement. Since the problem is a social one, until it is attacked from the social point of view, all attempts to meet any one isolated difficulty must be uneconomical and only superficially successful.

With the exception of a few small regions of the country, life on a farm is not attractive. The isolation and drudgery of the average family's life overshadow the advantages of independence, and hence those who can move away from the farm do so, and vast numbers of those who cannot move become mere machines for the shiftless performance of endless routine work. Compared with life in a city, life on a farm must always mean hard work and isolation. However, an intelligent and determined attempt to reduce these evils to a minimum and to develop the largely unexplored possibilities of farm life would result in a speedy solution of the problem. It is usually impossible for the farmer to

get away from home for more than a few hours at a time, because the live stock must be fed and cared for. Thus from the start he is habituated to a stay-at-home life. And as long as the country remains as thinly settled as at present, comparative isolation is bound to be the general rule, but complete separation from the outside world and from neighbors, now so common, is not a necessity.

In general, success on a farm is measured by the amount of work that is put in. Therefore, the daily program is arranged to stretch the working day to its limits. When the day is over the household is too tired for anything but bed. Evening visiting is very rare, and daytime visiting, except for business, is impossible. Reading, every form of social relaxation, is almost unknown in thousands of farm homes, because of this endless pressure for work, and the resulting fatigue. The story of the farm woman who lived ten years in a community and then met, for the first time at the state fair, a neighbor, who lived only two miles away, does not picture any unusual circumstances. There are many homes where a lamp is lighted only in the short days of winter; during most of the year darkness is the signal for bed. There is nothing to read in these houses, except, perhaps,

a farm or church weekly newspaper and a handful of left over school books. In good weather the family will occasionally go to church, and the man of the household goes to the nearest town once a week or so for supplies and to sell produce; his wife usually thinks she is too busy to go with him. Once or twice a week a passing neighbor may stop for a few minutes' chat; once or twice a year there is a funeral or a wedding, and this is all the relief from work year in and year out. There is leisure in the winter, but the roads are so bad, keeping warm in an open carriage so difficult, and habits of staying at home so fixed that this leisure is not used for greater sociability.

The children of a community meet at school, play and work together, and form the natural, wholesome habits that come from belonging to a social group. In the life of their parents they see just the opposite of this, a life confined exclusively to the household. It is no wonder then that the children look to the town for the only opportunity to continue and broaden the life they have known at school. The noise and movement, the opportunities for recreation at every turn, above all the chance to feel themselves part of a group exercise a fascination for which the average community does not even

attempt to find a substitute. In their own homes there is no example from which they can learn to cultivate their social possibilities; the school ignores the problem. Conscious of the lack in their lives, but unequipped to supply it themselves, they are only too ready to seize the slightest chance to exchange the farm for the town. This state of affairs is harder on the girls than the boys. The latter are freer to choose, and come to look to the town for all their recreation, even if they do not leave home. But parents, in order to protect their daughters from the dangers of the town, allow them to go very rarely. The result is that farm girls are cut off from all kinds of social outlet just at the age when they need it most. On leaving school the daily companionship with their schoolmates ceases, and their brothers and boy friends are fast drifting into the habit of spending their one leisure evening, Saturday, in town.

It is equally true that the farmer's wife is more isolated than her husband; partly because of that division of labor, which gives the man the control of buying and selling; but chiefly because, due to habit and convention, going to town, business calls, errands and exchange of labor are left to the men. The women are also cut off from the political life of the men.

In school meetings, local elections, road mendings, etc., the men not only find social outlet, but they get training, in thinking and acting as a group, a chance to express their instinct for leadership and organization. In regions where the granges are strong, men and women both get more opportunity for social activity, and there is usually a church in every neighborhood, but both these outlets are voluntary and do not absorb the whole community.

This isolation is probably the chief cause of the farmers' traditional conservatism and lack of initiative. Where there is almost no interchange of ideas, even through books, it is not strange that opinions and beliefs do not change rapidly. Cities are the homes of progress and reform, not because the city dweller is naturally more intelligent and energetic than the farmer, but because the latter is not forced into daily contact with numbers of people. The farmer is not subjected to the pressure of having to earn a living in an occupation that is obviously only one small part of a great whole. Each farm is more or less an independent unit in itself, and is largely self-supporting; the farmer can go along as he always has and as his father did before him and still keep going. He is slipping behind, of course, but the process is so

gradual and the cause so hard to see that it does not spur him to new and different efforts. If he does not keep at least at the heels of progress the man in the city is overtaken by swift ruin because of a competition which he can see and feel. This lack of competition is felt as much in the world of ideas as in that of business. The farmer may form his ideas and beliefs to fit a world that existed when his father was young, and he may grow old without ever having had any pressing occasion to change them. He associates little with people outside the family, and then with a small group who are nearly as familiar as his relatives; he reads little, and conditions about him change so slowly as to be almost imperceptible. His outworn ideas seem still to belong to the world he lives in, or if they clash he has only to withdraw a little from his neighbors and he is intrenched in a castle where the slow and rare forces that operate for change go past unnoted.

Although the farmer is isolated socially and economically he is really no more independent of the social and economic forces that influence and bring changes than the city worker. His relations with other industries and institutions are less obvious, but not less fundamental. Farmers feed the nation; if they fail, we must

either make a costly readjustment so that we can get the food from other countries, or we must fail with the farmers. The nation makes demands on the farmer to supply this food under changing conditions. To meet the demand with any success he must be ready for and understand these changes. The kind of demand must influence the way he works, just as his success or failure influences the rest of the country. Agriculture is the fundamental industry of a nation on which all other industries rest. The food supply must be assured before people can turn their energies to other types of production. The war has demonstrated this interdependence of farm and city life, and, in focussing attention on the extent to which a nation is affected by agricultural conditions, has pointed out to the farmer the responsibility for meeting world situations that rests upon him. The splendid way in which he has responded to the increased demands shows that he is able to adjust quickly to changed conditions, to put forth new energy and show initiative. In the present emergency farmers as a class have proved that their usual conservatism and failure to keep up with modern changes are not fundamental traits that must be accepted as necessary evils of agricultural

life, but are rather the result of the economic conditions and social surroundings in which the farmer lives.

Farmers are unorganized; they produce not as part of an industry, or even as members of a group, but as individuals. The demand for their surplus product is not a demand for standardized articles, made for conditions that are familiar to the farmer, but a general demand for food that comes from every part of the population and every part of the country. Usually the markets they supply are distant and unfamiliar. The lives and business methods of the people who buy their surplus are strange to them. There is probably no other form of production that could continue selling to distant, unfamiliar markets for any length of time, without organization or knowledge of the conditions which it must meet. The farmer is already suffering from his failure to take a more active part in those business affairs which concern him most intimately, and unless he wakes up to the possibilities of organized scientific farming, rural conditions will become much worse than they are at present.

Economic stagnation is reinforced by the dreary social conditions on the farm, forming together a vicious circle, each emphasizing the

Mrs. Marie Turner Harvey

other. Without economic enterprise the farmer is poor. His poverty makes it impossible for him to improve his living conditions or his social habits. And initiative, energy and business daring cannot develop under the living conditions that are to be found on farms all over the country. These conditions are worst, perhaps, where the natural resources are least advantageous for farming, but they are by no means confined to these regions. That they are not a necessary part of country life is proved by the situation in a few parts of the country, where the farmers are prosperous, comfortable, progressive, and influential.

The reform of any one isolated feature of farming conditions must then be a makeshift; no matter how well it is adapted to solve the individual problem, the general conditions of farm living will remain in the same unsatisfactory state, and will constantly counteract and hamper particular improvements. What is needed is something to shake the farmer from his apathy and time-honored habits of isolation; not a lesson in how to produce larger crops to the acre, but something which will make him realize the need of better farming and equip him to find out for himself how it is to be done. Opening up to the farmer the possibilities which

lie within himself will open to him the doors of comfortable living, prosperity and serviceable citizenship. Doing this effectively means, of course, beginning with the children and raising a new generation who shall be able to take their meager heritage and increase it a thousandfold. The necessity of an educational attack on country life cannot be over-emphasized, because the failure of the farmer to come up to the standards of the rest of the world to-day is not to be explained by some one evil, but by the farmer himself and his whole life.

Generalities about the drudgery and isolation of farm life give so little hint of actual conditions as to be almost meaningless to one who has not seen them. The average town-dweller speaks of fertile farm land and sees a picture of a farmer living in a big, comfortable house, surrounded by stretches of fields yielding bumper crops, living on the fat of the land, subscribing to all the magazines and having leisurely evenings in which to read them, riding over beautiful roads in his Ford, and taking part in a generous neighborhood life that unites the whole community into a prosperous, happy family. Something approaching this does exist in certain portions of the middle and far West, and there are, of course, well-to-do farmers all

over the country who are keeping up with the times. But even in very rich regions the truth falls so very far short of this rosy picture as to make one hesitate to describe it. A country life commission of a few years back suppressed the bulk of their report because they felt an accurate description of rural conditions would paint such a discouraging picture as to do more harm than good. It is no part of this discussion to go into these conditions in any detail, but a description of a typical farm in a rich farming country will emphasize the fundamental nature of the changes that are necessary.

In attempting any description some one region must be selected and certain conditions prevailing there will doubtless be local, but the general picture is not extreme. The country chosen is fertile, the land valuable, and the farmers all American with generations of pioneer life behind them, and though there is little surplus money, the pinch of actual poverty is very rare. On a large farm, raising grain almost exclusively, the same fields are planted to the same crops year after year, while the same land lies idle indefinitely, the amount of fertilizing done is almost negligible, and no records are kept to show the actual decrease in yield. The farmer looks at his crop, knows it is poor,

but plants there the next year. The woodland has been destroyed before his time, but he does nothing to replant, and continues to cut the few trees that are left as he needs wood. The farm is stocked with pure bred cows that are cared for with skill and real knowledge, but the poultry yard contains a few mongrel hens that eat quantities of expensive food and lay the minimum number of eggs, which sell for a low price because the supply is small and irregular. There are no fruit trees on the place, except some old apple trees that are not sprayed, and therefore yield only a few bushels of wormy fruit. There is no garden on the farm; a tiny patch like a flower bed is planted with radishes and lettuce in the spring, and some root vegetables, potatoes, turnips and beets are grown, but fruit and green vegetables are bought in cans at the village grocery store. Thanksgiving pies are made with canned pumpkin. No vegetables, except roots, are saved for winter use, and no preserves or jellies are made in most homes. Meat is preserved, especially pork; at hog-killing time, bacon and ham are smoked and salt pork put down, and a great deal of sausage is made. To keep this through the year it is partially cooked, packed in pails and covered with boiling grease to seal it. This forms the

staple diet during the winter and through the hot summer until it is gone. The regular menu the year around is pork, potatoes, and hot bread or pancakes. Ill health results and is met with liberal dosings of patent medicines. A story comes of a Southern farmer who was supposed to have epileptic fits; he moved to another part of the country where a varied diet was the rule, and has never had a fit since. Every country doctor and teacher will admit that general poor health is just as prevalent in the country as in the city slum, and that care and hygiene are not nearly so good. Sleeping with shut windows and closing everything air-tight in the fall without letting in any fresh air until spring are general habits.

The comparative size and comfort of the barns and the house cease to be the joke the casual traveler makes of them if you happen to be the farmer's wife who is doing the work in the house. A square box of a house—four rooms, two to a floor, shelter a family of four, and whatever hired help there may be. There are no closets, no furnace, no lights, no running water and no drainage. No attempt has been made to install any labor-saving devices. The farmer's wife gets up at four in the morning, cooks a substantial breakfast of cornmeal mush,

salt pork, potatoes, coffee and biscuits, helps the men of the household with the milking, takes care of the milk, washes the pans and the separator, feeds and waters the chickens, carrying the water from the pump to the chicken yard in pails. Then she goes back to the house, carries more water for the housework, heats the water, washes the breakfast dishes, cleans the house, does the washing or ironing, gets dinner for the men who come in from the fields at twelve sharp, feeds the hens again, churns, cleans up, and then has a little leisure in which she can tend to what little vegetable garden there is before it is time to get supper. In the summer months supper often is at eight o'clock or after, so that every minute of daylight may be spent in the fields. She will help with the evening milking and tend to the milk again, get an eight-o'clock supper, wash the dishes, and her day is done. She probably does a great deal of her own sewing, and, of course, there are children who must be cared for in most homes. When we stop to think that every drop of water must be carried into the house and heated on the kitchen range, and all the waste water carried out, that the washing is done in moveable tin tubs, that, in fact, nearly every bit of this work is done in the very hardest way possible, it does not seem

strange that the relatively unnecessary occupations of canning and gardening are neglected. To get through such a routine as this and keep any energy and interest for study or recreation requires ability and training. But the farm woman grows up seeing the work done in this way, expecting to help with some of the outdoor chores, without training to enable her to see and weigh values, or any knowledge of better ways of doing things. The farm house is the last place on the average farm where any money is spent for improvements, chiefly because the increased returns from a comfortable home and leisure are less tangible than from a new field or a new piece of farm machinery.

The lamps are not lit at night. Writing a letter is a special chore, and is put off as long as possible. Reading and writing are so little a part of the normal routine of life that all facility disappears. They know how to read and write, but it is such hard work that there is no pleasure and very little profit in it. A general contempt for "book farming" makes them refuse to listen to advice from agricultural colleges and stations and leaves them wholly at a loss in dealing with a new problem. "A nigger and a mule" are the best and only reliable teachers of farming. To prove a new method it must

be watched through its whole course and the results seen before it arouses even interest. A new pest or disease so long as it does not affect the main crop is allowed to run its course, and the crop it attacks is given up. A common way of dealing with insects is to beat them off the plants with brush. The same lack of foresight is shown in the way the farmer buys and sells. He does not find out about other crops or even about his special crop in other regions. He almost never combines with his neighbors to gain any of the advantages of coöperative buying and selling. He puts himself in the hands of the middle man and distributor, and although he has complete control of the product, makes no effort to say anything about what shall be done with it. Each farm is a business in itself. Imagine a factory head or office manager who ran his business without paying any attention to what his competitors were doing, without investigating the improvements other factories were installing, without reading newspapers or trade journals, without even trying to run his business so that it would yield him either a fair return on his investment or leisure for the enjoyment of life. Yet this is what the majority of farmers are doing.

A pamphlet on the advantages of alfalfa

raising, or an easy way to build an ice-house, is not going to arouse much response; very probably it will not even be read by the farmer whose interest and hope in life stretches no farther than the accomplishment of the day's round of work. He must acquire a new point of view in all things before he will make changes and improvements in specific things. What is needed is a remaking of the structure of country life, an improvement in the social habits and the work habits of the whole farm family. The schools, the churches, and the granges are the most potent factors for influence. Of these the school is by far the most important, since it is the one influence in the community that touches all homes alike, and since it has the task and the opportunity to mould the lives and the opinions of the group who will soon be the community.

The little one-room school exerts an influence in the life of every child that goes to it that cannot be over-estimated; and every child in a district spends the best part of the year there for the most important years of his life. The children take home what they learn and thus the life of the whole family is influenced. If the school is working with a definite aim and with social ideals, the immediate influence of the school on the whole community is easily traced.

The school not only reaches the most impressionable element of a neighborhood in its work, but is the natural center for the entire community life. It and it alone belongs to the whole community, everyone in the district has the right and the opportunity to take an active part in its conduct, and in it everyone meets without distinctions of wealth, race or religion. Churches, granges, and clubs may exert a more powerful influence on their own membership, but they do not bring the community together as a unit. There are regions where there are no churches, granges or clubs, and even where they exist in a highly flourishing condition, there are always certain families that take no part; there is always more than one church and the basis of clubs is an exclusive membership. Thus in spite of their influence for good, these institutions break up a neighborhood into different groups, with different interests and different methods that tend toward rivalry and increase the lines of cleavage as they become more successful. On the other hand, no district is so poor or so scattered that it does not have its school house, nor so busy or cliqué that everyone in it who has a child does not use it, and all meet in it on the common ground of their interest in their children.

Every country community already has in its school the necessary machinery for changing any or all of the local conditions it wishes to attack. In its school building it has a meeting place which can become the center of the social or educational life of the adults as well as of the children, not merely a building which could be used in lieu of any other gathering place, but the natural, logical center of the common neighborhood life.

If the school is to be used as the center for the improvement of country life, we must have a different kind of school from that found in the majority of rural districts. It is not so much better buildings or modern methods of teaching that are needed as a new spirit, a new vision of the possibilities of country life and of the school in that life. In regions where there exists the stagnation we have described, the schools of course reflect the same conditions. They are far from being a ready made agent for the remaking of farm life, and at first sight may seem to be merely one of its numberless phases needing change. But those who have seen the changes in a whole community brought about by a changed school must believe that with a new kind of school will come new social conditions, better agriculture, better health and better citizenship.

The school is the point of departure for improved conditions because children are the most teachable element in a community, because they represent perhaps the strongest common interest in any group of people, and because in the school house every community has a center which belongs to all alike and in which all may meet on an equal footing. Furthermore the education of one generation of farm children in a socialized school should banish forever the necessity for reform and semi-philanthropic movements originating from the outside. At the present practically every scheme that is launched to help the farmer is manned by people who are not themselves farmers. The farmers' shortcomings are far-reaching enough to stir people not directly concerned with agriculture to try to point the way to greater efficiency and happiness on the farm. The right kind of school will make outside interest unnecessary for the coming generation, for it will teach country children how to develop the possibilities of their environment. Such schools are at present few in number, and are usually started through the initiative of an individual teacher, a normal school, or a state board, the impetus starting from without as in other rural reforms. But though few, these schools

have furnished such convincing demonstration of the value of a good school to a community that farmers everywhere are already demanding more from their schools, and are expecting them to serve the interests of the whole district.

It is not suggested that the rural school is the only proper agent for working for a better country life, or that the kind of work done by the agricultural colleges, for instance, is not both valuable and necessary. But we do believe emphatically that in its school every district already has the machinery for getting over this type of work most effectively, and that the widest possible use of the school plant is one of the essential steps in the development of the new rural school. Take the case of the agricultural college which is trying to conduct a propaganda for improvement in some specific practice. At present its only method of reaching the farmer is through the mail or by an occasional lecture or meeting delivered in some more or less central location. Pamphlets and lectures are too apt to be effective only with the people who are already converted to the point of view they present, or who are at least in a questioning frame of mind. Consequently the college works long and hard for very meager results. No campaign necessarily so scattered

and working at such long distance, can be as effective as one conducted on the spot through an agent already in intimate touch with a whole community. Working through the school, the college could without more work reach every farm in the neighborhood. The school district offers an organization unit small enough to reach everyone at any time; the school building furnishes the central meeting place and the community work in turn increases the value and reality of the children's school life. Every district school is already functioning as a vital part of the community life, and anything therefore which is really a part of the school must function again in the community.

The use of the school plant as a local clearing house must, of course, strongly influence the character of the school itself. However desirable such use might be for the adults of the community, it is, of course, legitimate only if it also contributes to the realization of the educational ideals for which the school is working. The school is first for the children of the community; to teach them so that they may make for themselves a happy and useful life in whatever walk of life they choose. Making the school a vital and necessary part of the social and economic life of its district cannot fail,

however, to make that school a better place in which to train children to be healthy, happy children and responsible, efficient citizens. And so long as social and economic conditions in our rural districts remain as they are it will be almost impossible, without making such use of the school, to bring up a new generation of farmers who shall not live in the same desolate and half-hearted way as their parents.

CHAPTER II

THE LITTLE RED SCHOOL HOUSE TODAY

Everyone who has worked to improve our schools has had to meet the argument that since the schools were good enough for our fathers it is only putting on airs to talk of changing them for our children. In the country this tradition has become symbolized by "The Little Red School House." A belief in its almost magic efficacy offers a real stumbling block to the teacher in her efforts to have her school keep pace with the changes in the world around it. America is justly proud of this far-famed institution, but we are apt to forget that the ground for our pride is the fact that under extremely difficult pioneer conditions we still kept some kind of school, not that this school was so good in itself. It is true that many of our greatest men got most of their education in the district school, but it is very unlikely that the school was the cause of their greatness. These men would undoubtedly have achieved distinction if they had never been to school at all, or even

if they had been to the most modern and model of schools. The little red school house did not have a rule for teaching that guaranteed success: Only stop to think of the thousands of its children for whom its opportunities and training were inadequate and that superstition vanishes. Its claim to our pride and affection lies in the fact that in spite of privation and the almost overwhelming hardships of isolation, cold winters, bad roads and the necessity of keeping children at home for farm work, it kept the fires of learning and ambition burning. Our forefathers believed in an equal opportunity for all and part of that opportunity was the tradition of culture and a belief in education. The first one-room schools kept that tradition alive and tried to put the belief into practice.

The question that we must ask of our schools, both in the city and in the country, is not whether they, in the face of great difficulties, did what they could for our grandfathers, but are they to-day doing all that we want done for our children. We must not ask if they have produced great men, but if they help the commonest man to use his meager opportunities and to strive for a steady purpose. That the country school should do this is imperative, for

on it rests the burden of the prosperity of our whole country. Without a body of contented, enlightened and ambitious farmers, keeping their farms from generation to generation, agriculture cannot flourish and as it flourishes the whole nation prospers. There are great regions of the country where the farmers' ignorance extends to their own jobs and their only ambition is for a change. To anyone knowing these conditions the school offers the only sure and practical way of changing this. Good schools for the country are not simply an inspiring ideal for the teacher to hold before herself, they are an economic necessity for the city dweller as well as for the farmer. In the past this country has offered such vast stretches of fertile land that we could prosper with poor farming. When the old land was exhausted the shiftless, ignorant farmer could make a living by moving to new ground. There is at present practically no more new land to exploit, and continued exploitation of the old means certain and swift ruin to the farmer with consequent hardship to the country at large. All over the country we are successfully attempting to meet the tremendous responsibility resting on the country school. But there are still many thousands of one-room schools which would seem

impossible nightmares to the teacher in the ordinary town or city school.

In 1915 it was estimated that there were about 200,000 one-room schools in the United States; 50,000 of these are in the corn belt and 10,000 are in the state of Missouri alone. Many of these are doing the best they can with the conditions which they find around them. This book hopes to show how that best was reached in one district and how it is a practical possibility for them all. There are, however, thousands of others that let their resources for a good school lie entirely unexplored. When we stop to examine the special problems and difficulties of the rural school it does not seem strange that this should be so. Each one of the 200,000 or more one-room schools in the country is a complete unit in itself, isolated in position and organization, and employing one teacher on whom falls the entire responsibility for the education of the district.

Suppose a normal school pupil decides to specialize in rural education, because she believes in the possibilities of country life. She spends part of two years studying the problems of the country school, the best curriculum for it, and special methods of teaching; in a progressive normal school she will learn something of

rural economics and sociology. Equipped with a diploma and a fund of hopes and ideals she looks for a school. Immediately she meets her first disappointment; she is young and inexperienced, therefore the cautious local school board decides she should be cheap. They offer her perhaps as low a salary as $35.00 a month for the eight months of school. If she is determined and has good recommendations from her college she may find a school willing to pay even $50.00 a month. She has committed herself to a year of comparative privation and has learned that her chances for future prosperity are not very bright; if she is entirely dependent on her own earnings she probably decides that one year of this is all she can afford.

The second discouragement comes when the teacher begins to look about for a place to live. Perhaps she thinks that boarding in the homes of her pupils will offer her an opportunity to become quickly and easily acquainted and learn her district. When she arrives she is apt to find that she is taken rather grudgingly into some family whose turn it is to board the teacher. Because of her small salary she cannot pay what her board is worth and is not, therefore, an especially desirable guest, and she must go to that house which has agreed to

receive her. They have a house full already and she must share her bed-room with one of the girls in the family. This makes evening work extremely difficult if not impossible; gradually she succumbs and attempts only to keep up with to-morrow's lessons. The women of the household are overworked, and the teacher, sensitive about her inadequate payment for board, is apt, in order to quiet her conscience, to give up more time than she can afford to help with the housework. Perhaps the only available home is a long way from the school house; the teacher must walk this distance twice a day in all kinds of weather. This not only fatigues her, but shortens her work day; in the winter to reach home by nightfall she must leave the school house with her pupils. She may become attached to the family she is living with, or she may find herself forced into the most intimate relations with a family whose tastes and interests are entirely different from hers. In either case her physical surroundings are a daily handicap to good teaching, and there is no place in the district where she can find a home that will offer her leisure and comfort. Under such conditions the teacher cannot look forward to a permanent home in the community, and the natural alternative is to look for another com-

munity, if not to another occupation offering more suitable living conditions. Rural teachers, in a great many cases, have put up year after year with seemingly impossible living conditions. Sometimes teachers are utterly unable to find a single family in the district willing to accept them as boarders. The law provides that every child shall have school opportunities, but it sometimes defeats itself by failing to provide a living place for the teacher. An optimistic estimate gives "over 600" teachers' cottages in the United States in 1916. Many of these are in districts where the one-room school has already been replaced by a consolidated school; very few of the 200,000 one-room school teachers, therefore, have any assurance of finding a comfortable home.

The conditions the new teacher finds at her school house are not much more encouraging. An ugly box of a building, long in need of paint, stands out bleakly in the middle of a lot left to the school because no one wants it. No attempt has been made to beautify the surroundings or to supply play apparatus for the children. Water is supplied by a dirty well or more often by a cistern; it is not uncommon to have no water at all, especially if a neighbor's well is within reach. The toilet facilities are in the

yard, the doorways unscreened, boys and girls accommodated in the same building or in outhouses facing each other, and these in a state which makes them almost unsafe for the use of children. Every country teacher knows the nature of these conditions and can describe individual schools where they are unbelievably disgraceful. Years of neglect, of defilement, and destruction wrought by tramps cause conditions which are a menace to the morals and health of all the pupils.

The outside door of the school house opens into the class room; the children's hats, coats and lunches are hung on pegs around the wall; their rubbers and wet shoes make puddles on the floor. The floor needs a good scrubbing. An ancient dictionary lying on a broken organ looks as if it had never been dusted. Three old atlases are sticking through the book-case door. The plaster has fallen from the ceiling and been brushed into a pile at the foot of the blackboard. The woodwork is painted an ugly pink which has become blackened by a leaky stove pipe. The walls once papered with a large figured design in brown have peeled and faded. The blackboard is fastened so high on the wall that the little children have to stand on tip-toe to reach it. A picture of Lincoln, with the glass

broken, is hung high under the ceiling, and a panel of Bible pictures, placed so high that the objects are almost indistinguishable, has slipped askew. There are no other pictures and no maps. A great circular stove in one corner of the room sends a rusty pipe to the opposite corner. In spite of a steel ventilating screen around the stove, the temperature varies by 20 degrees in different parts of the room on a cold day. Some schools put the stove in the center of the room. In this way more children can be heated, if not overheated, by it, but, on the other hand, the children near the windows are even colder. Every two or three winters one of the big boys will have his feet frozen as he sits studying at a remote desk.

The windows stretch down opposite sides of the room and have no shades; the light streams in, hurting the pupils' eyes as they work. Most rural schools do not supply any janitor service; the teacher herself, with what help she can get from the pupils, has to keep the school room in order. Winter mornings she must get there in time to start the fire, she also must herself sweep and dust if she wants the building clean. The room is big and the children track in a lot of dirt, so that it is nearly impossible to keep the place in perfect order in addition to her hard

A Glimpse of the Old Schoolroom.—Typical of a Thousand Others of Its Kind

day's teaching. As a result the room is only half kept at best, and many schools are deplorably dirty and untidy. A school to be good must be clean, but the country teacher in order to be clean has to add so much housework to her teaching that it is often impossible for her to do the other work well.

Not only are the surroundings of the class room unattractive, but the school equipment is inadequate. The room is furnished with a teacher's desk, a movable chair or two, and stationary desks and seats for the children, and often with only benches for the youngest pupils. Sometimes there is a small organ, usually a dictionary, an old atlas, and an out-of-date map or two. In many states each district is free to decide how much of the pupils' individual equipment is to be furnished. Consequently in many schools chalk is literally the only school supply bought by the board. Every piece of paper, every pencil, every drop of ink is brought by the individual pupil for his own use. This makes it difficult to insure even the minimum supply of paper, pencil and text books necessary for the daily lessons, and causes constant inconvenience because of the variety of material used. Slates are still frequently used by pupils whose parents are economically inclined, and the teacher

must struggle against the dirt and bad writing that goes with them. The practical impossibility of introducing a diversified curriculum without any control over school equipment is obvious. Many a teacher has had to cut out drawing lessons or give up the use of systematic note-books because it was impossible to make all the parents see their value and buy the necessary paper and books. Districts with an enrollment of from twenty to thirty children expect $300.00 to $400.00 to cover the entire expenses of the school for a year. This money is spent for the teacher's salary, 300 or so bushels of coal, two boxes of chalk and a broom; and then harassed directors wonder why they cannot find a good teacher who will stay more than one year.

The poor school buildings, the lack of equipment and the absurdly small sums voted for school taxes can all be traced to the failure of the community to see the relation between the school and the general problem of country life. Of this problem every farmer is more or less conscious, and often his analysis of its difficulties and their causes is keen and just. But it is just beginning to be recognized that the school house is the best point of attack on these difficulties. The farmer appreciates the value of a

good education, but is apt to think that it is not a necessity for the boy or girl who stays on the farm. They accept with an unfortunate compliance the idea that the really smart, ambitious child will want to leave the farm for life in a town, and in consequence they are willing that he should go to the town for the education preparatory to city life. When they once realize that farming is a profession requiring an education and special training they will appreciate the importance and possibilities of the country schools and be willing to spend more money on them. The drawbacks to teaching in a rural school will, of course, melt away when school taxes are increased. But farmers are not the only class of people who must be awakened to the necessity of a change. In many states the law fixes a lower tax rate for the country schools than for the city. In Missouri, for instance, the maximum tax for a rural school district is sixty-five cents on the hundred dollars, while urban schools may vote a tax as high as one dollar and ten cents on the hundred. To one familiar with the problem peculiar to the country school this seems a particularly unfortunate law; the country school board needs to be encouraged by every outside influence to spend more, not less, on its school.

Conditions of life in the country are the cause of other problems which make the task of the rural teacher harder than that of her town neighbor. The most constant of these is, perhaps, the small size of the school. Farms are scattered; and the school district must be small enough so that all the children in it can reach the school house. The result is that one teacher and one room is enough to take care of all the children in the district. But these children are of all ages, from the beginner of six to children in their teens who continue in the school in lieu of an available high school. One assumes at first sight that one teacher should be able to manage 20 to 30 pupils, but when we consider that in the group there are children doing the work of every grade, and some the work of several different grades, we realize that the teacher must use special methods. Recitation periods must be very short, if the ordinary methods of grading are attempted, and they are short in most one-room schools. The pupils must be left for long periods to study lessons from books without any help or direction, except for the few seconds that the teacher can steal between recitations. The teacher is kept jumping from one lesson and one grade of children to another with a rapidity that is

bound to make for mechanical work. The wise teacher, in order to cover the ground prescribed in the state course of study, will, of course, combine grades wherever possible and will cover two subjects in one lesson, grammar and spelling or English and geography, for instance. In a one-room school in the middle West, considered quite a model for the neighborhood, the following program was actually carried out every day by an experienced teacher. There were no second or fifth-grade children, so there remained six grades. Twenty-six pupils were enrolled with an average attendance of about twenty. The day was divided into five and ten-minute recitation periods, while each grade worked on some assigned task at their desks for periods of an hour, and then recited. School opened with a very brief morning exercise, then followed one lesson in arithmetic, three in reading for different grades and one in grammar. There was a recess of twenty minutes, and then the teacher "heard" one class in arithmetic, one in spelling, three in succession in arithmetic and one in history. The afternoon session was divided into two periods with another twenty-minute recess. Before recess the teacher gave two lessons in geography, one in reading, and one in spelling, besides one to the whole school

in writing. After recess there were six more lessons, two in reading, two in geography, and two in spelling. Thus the teacher directed twenty-two different recitations every day. She was following exactly the model program recommended to teachers by the state superintendent of schools, except that her work was rather easier as she had only six grades instead of eight.

Another solution of the problem of the ungraded room that is sometimes offered by state superintendents is that of alternating grades. That is, one year the teacher will give her pupils the course of study for the first, third, fifth and seventh grades, and the next the second, fourth, sixth and eighth. Although this makes fewer classes to teach in one day, it is probably harder than the other way, for if such a plan is to work at all the teacher must put the pupils through the work whether they are ready for it or not. One year she may have to carry children through work that is much too hard, but the next year these same children will do the work of the grade below, which is correspondingly too easy.

Of course, there is no doubt that it is harder to teach a school room where there are pupils from six to sixteen than a class where all the

children are about the same age. But there are certain advantages, for the children especially, when different ages work together. The ordinary methods of trying to impose the system of grades on a room which of necessity must remain ungraded make it difficult to gain these advantages, and the hardships of teaching under these conditions need no other emphasis than their description. Another way of meeting the problem will be discussed in a later chapter.

The other problems of organization to be met by the rural teacher, while not so different from those of the town teacher, are harder because they must be faced alone. Every state has its department of education and most of them have specialists who devote all their time to the rural schools. But in a state with ten thousand one-room schools the help that any one teacher can get from these specialists must be limited to pamphlets and circular letters. She can get plenty of advice and discussion of general problems and methods, but there is no one with whom she can share the responsibility for the hundred and one questions and new situations that must be met daily. When there is a county superintendent she may or may not have more direct coöperation in her work. If the county fails to make any provision for their superintendent's

traveling expenses, he has no better opportunities than the state officials to find out about the actual conditions in his schools. Along with this the teacher is required to follow a printed course of study, and in some states the curriculum is laid down in the greatest detail. She must take the conditions which she finds in her own district and bend them to fit a curriculum which was made without any study of her special problems or her peculiar qualifications for meeting them. If there is any attempt to do more than the most perfunctory, routine teaching, it cannot fail to be a difficult task. The teacher has often no opportunity whatever to lighten it by consultation and discussion with other teachers. Books and pamphlets she can have, provided she has the means to buy them and the time and strength to read them; and for cases of discipline that become acute she can appeal to her school board; otherwise her isolation is complete. This isolation is usually accepted without comment. But there can be no doubt that the rural teacher's burdens would be lighter if she had the opportunities for discussion and sharing of experiences and responsibility that are a part of the daily program of the teacher in every school with more than one room. Too much talking shop is probably bad

A Detail of the School Interior in the Old Days

for persons of any profession, but the other extreme, no chance whatever to talk shop, cannot fail to be worse.

Conditions of life in the country are responsible for another group of problems which are peculiar to the country school. Attendance at a country school is always more or less irregular; the teacher expects it and must adjust her program to meet it. Pupils must often walk long distances to school; in bad weather this is impossible for the little ones, and a very severe winter storm often closes a school for a day or so. Many farmers are quite willing to drive their children to school in cold or wet weather, but there are thousands of districts all over the country where the roads are so bad that in very wet weather and during the spring thaws they become impassable for teams. The result is that during the muddy seasons half of the school living at the greatest distance will be absent for days at a stretch. While the attendance of the little children is broken up by the weather, that of the older ones, boys especially, is almost equally irregular because of the farm work. In the ordinary farming country the older boys seldom start school for a month or so after it has opened. Their work is essential at home for gathering and storing the fall crops. There is

no hired help available for this, and even if there were the average farmer could not afford it. Farming is not an occupation yielding any margin of profit, and it requires the efforts of the whole family to make it a self-supporting occupation. Therefore, at least under present conditions of farming, the teacher must accept the withdrawal of her older boys for fall harvesting and for another period of planting in the spring. Often the girls who are doing the same class work as these boys can remain in school, and when the boys return they find themselves left far behind. To compensate for these conditions, the boy who stays on the home farm can often attend school, for part of the year, longer than the boy in the city. In the middle of the winter farm work is comparatively light and can be managed by the adults of the family during these months; therefore, there is no reason why the boy should not go to school for as many winters as the school can contribute to his edution. While the girls lose fewer days of school than the boys because of the lack of hired labor on the farm, they usually have to stay at home to look after the house in any family emergency. If the mother is sick the burden of the entire household falls on the daughters, and if anyone else in the house is sick at least one of

the girls is needed to take care of this extra work.

Fortunately for the teacher the season of the year when the rough weather keeps the little ones at home is the very time when the older children are most free to come to school; while the pleasant fall and spring weather brings the little ones to school when the big boys are kept at home for farm work. But even so, the teacher must make constant adjustments and struggle with the difficulties of classes where some pupils are advanced and others much retarded. In 1910 the enrollment in the rural schools of the country was 11,100,553, and the daily attendance only about seven and a half million. The average daily attendance in the rural schools is 68 per cent and in urban schools it is 79 per cent. Probably the number of truants or indifferent parents is not larger in the country than in the city, so this difference in attendance can be traced largely to conditions due to country life; conditions which are likely to change only as country life changes.

Besides irregular attendance many schools are further hampered by short terms. That is, the difficulties described cause a great many school boards to fix a very short school year. While children in towns and cities are going to

school from eight to ten months a year there are thousands of country children whose school is open for only three months in the year. In many states the length of the school term required by law is longer for the city than for the rural school. The same short-sighted policy that forces the rural school board to spend less money on its school than its city neighbor, allows it to keep that same school house closed for more months of the year. This condition is so general that the average term for rural schools all over the country is forty-six days shorter than it is for the urban schools.

Weather difficulties and small taxes are met in another way in some schools, which although it insures a full school year cuts into the value of the work done tremendously. In order to avoid the period of bad roads in the late winter, some schools have a divided term. School starts in the fall at the usual time and runs for three or four months, then closes for the worst months of the winter and opens again for two or three months in the spring. During the spring term the older boys are usually not even expected to go to school. The divided term means scant interest in the school, shifting teachers, poor attendance, and all the troubles that go with an inferior school. There is usually a new teacher,

not only every year in these schools, but every term. This is partly because the teacher is anxious to find a school where she will not have to stop for a long vacation just as she has her school under way, and partly because the board tries to save money on the spring term. Usually only the younger children attend it, so the school is smaller and a cheaper teacher suffices. Schools that are willing to pay a salary of $65.00 for the winter term will try to get a teacher for $30.00 or $40.00 for the spring. This new teacher comes in to finish up the required year's work without knowing the methods of the former teacher or the abilities of her pupils, and after these pupils have spent two months of enforced idleness, shut in their homes by bad weather. It is no wonder that the divided term has come to stand for a shiftless, indifferent school district.

Nearly every country teacher can probably think of a number of situations peculiar to the country which cause her difficult moments and problems that are not touched upon here. But enough has been said to indicate the types of problems that must be met by the rural school. The cause of most of them can be summed up by isolation and poverty. Isolation when combined with bad roads forces a small school, it means

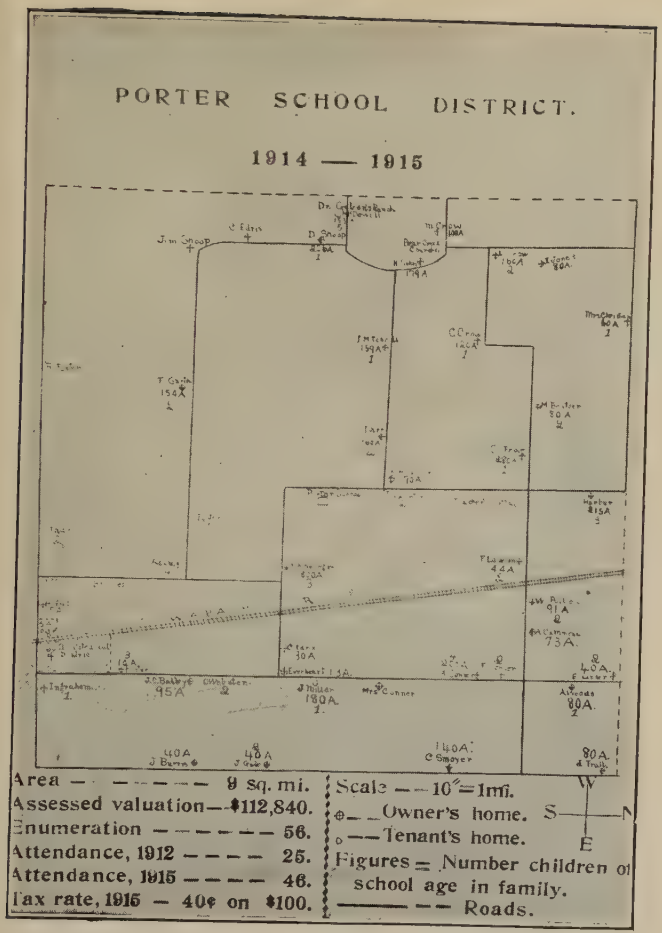
irregular attendance and often a short school year. Isolation forces the teacher into inconvenient living quarters, cuts her off from contact with other teachers, and hinders school officials in any efforts to understand and deal with her problems at first hand. The traditional poverty of the farmer, usually without foundation in fact, serves as an excuse for poor buildings, lack of up-keep, insufficient equipment and low salaries; and has been used by economically minded legislators to force low taxes and allow short terms. These difficulties would largely disappear if the schools had more pupils. This is shown in the nation-wide movement for consolidation.

Wherever several school districts have been able to combine and build one large, modern building, employ several teachers, and transport pupils to and from school, many of the problems of isolation and most of those of poverty have been solved. Some states, Indiana among them, are rapidly progressing towards the time when they can point to a complete reorganization of their rural schools upon the consolidation basis. But in order to make consolidation possible, certain conditions are necessary. First, the people in two or three adjoining districts must want it at the same time. Until the people who

are sending their children to school realize the necessity for improving school conditions and see their way to becoming part of a consolidated district, the one-room school will remain. But even in districts where the farmers have outgrown the tradition of extreme economy and of letting well enough alone, it is not always possible to combine school districts. In the sparsely populated portions of the country a small one-room school can take care of all the children in a number of square miles; if the size of this district was increased two or three times, distances would be so great that it would be impossible for many children to go to school at all, even with school transportation. But in most regions where population is more or less scattered the roads are so bad that transportation is impossible. Like good schools, good roads come only to fairly populous and prosperous regions, and without good roads consolidation is impossible. It may seem an exaggeration to say that there are any considerable portions of the country where roads are so bad that a ride of five or six miles twice a day settles the fate of a good school. But the mud road is still the usual thing in this country, and clay is more common than sandy soil. A dirt road and a clay soil means that during wet weather and

winter thaws, roads become bottomless, wheels sink in to the hubs, horses flounder knee-deep, unable to pull anything but the lightest wagons, and even these stick fast in hollows. Automobiles are, of course, useless on such roads. But as roads improve and remote regions become more thickly settled, consolidation will spread. This is especially true if in the meanwhile teachers and farmers turn their attention to the improvement of the existing one-room schools. There are thousands of rural districts where consolidation cannot come for a very long time, but a great many of the difficulties described can be overcome in the very buildings where they are now most exaggerated. Forcing consolidation on unwilling districts or under impossible conditions is no more successful than other attempts at coercion. It has been tried in some places and the results have not justified it. Some school districts voted for consolidation and then refused to vote the money necessary to build the new building and run the school.

The first step towards the improvement of rural education is to make the widest possible development of the one-room school. Consolidation will follow naturally in the districts where it is practical. Consolidation has of late


PORTER SCHOOL DISTRICT.
1914 — 1915
Area — — — — — — 9 sq. mi.
Assessed valuation—$112,840.
Enumeration — — — — — 56.
Attendance, 1912 — — — 25.
Attendance, 1915 — — — 46.
Tax rate, 1915 — 40¢ on $100.
Scale — — 10 = 1mi.
Owner's home.
Tenant's home.
Figures = Number children of school age in family.
Roads.
S
N
E
W

MAP OF THE DISTRICT INDICATING THE SCATTERED POPULATION

received more attention than any other phase of the rural school question. But this book is to concern itself with what can be done now in the 200,000 one-room schools of the country, not only to minimize the problems already reviewed, but to vitalize school life and teach the coming generation to make the most of their opportunities as farmers.

Mrs. Harvey's school at Kirksville, Missouri, has done this successfully for five years. She has furnished a demonstration of what a small, rundown school in a divided district can do to unite and stimulate the whole community by giving the children the kind of education they need. Her work should prove especially helpful to rural teachers because it has been carried on under such typical conditions as to inspire every teacher with the hope of accomplishing the same results without resources or equipment beyond those given by any school board.

CHAPTER III

HOW PORTER FOUND A SOLUTION OF THE SCHOOL PROBLEM

The Porter School is in the northern part of Missouri, in a district that lies next to the city of Kirksville. A few years ago there was nothing to distinguish it from hundreds of other one-room schools throughout the state. To-day the school is a model not only for the whole state, but for rural teachers all over the country; and it is a model in the true sense of the word, for what has been accomplished has been done without any greater material resources than are at the disposal of any school district. The school is the work of Mrs. Harvey; but her work would never have been possible if the parents of the district had not felt the need of a new school, and had not been willing to work hard themselves to improve conditions.

The school house is an oblong, one-room building, with an acre of school yard, situated in the exact center of the nine square miles of the district. The site was about the most unattractive in the district; there was not a tree in the

yard nor anywhere in the neighborhood. But the building had to be there so that no portion of the district should have the advantage over another in the matter of distance. The house was built twenty years ago at a total cost of $600.00, and, until 1912, had been left just as it was finished at that time. There was no basement and no foundation, clap-boarding was off in many places, the paint had peeled and half the shutters were down. The well was only half covered, the outbuildings were in dreadful shape; signs of constant occupation by tramps were everywhere. Inside, the room was in no better condition; the plaster was off the walls in many places, a hideous figured brown paper was discolored and flapping. There were no shades at the windows and many lights were broken. The blackboards were too high for the little children to reach; there were no pictures and no books. A huge stove in the middle made much dirt and only half heated the room. Children occasionally froze their feet sitting at their desks, although the stove was red-hot.

Along the edge of the Porter district ran a railroad and a state road, both highways for tramps. For years they used the school house as their hotel, abusing the place in every possible way, and making it unsafe for the teacher

to go alone to the building in the morning. In fact, the tramps made impossible any attempt to keep the place clean, attractive and homelike. It was no use to repair or stock the place, as the work would be undone over night. This situation had been accepted for so long that the whole community honestly believed that any attempt to lock doors or keep the tramps out would result in barn burnings or some other form of outrage. The district was infested with tramps who, so long as they were allowed to use the school house unhampered, left the farmhouses alone.

The neglect that was shown on the school premises was also visible in the attitude of most of the community towards the school. They realized that conditions were bad, so bad that no one sent his children there if he could make any other arrangement. Lack of interest, trouble over the school, and neighborhood hard-feeling were becoming a tradition, unfortunate but unavoidable. There had been a violent quarrel at the time the building was erected and although the school had enjoyed periods of success and prosperity since, its proximity to the city was supposed to make it inevitably a second-rate and makeshift affair. Its general standing is indicated by this notice, which at

one time was nailed to the door by the school board:

"Rules By which to
Govern or controle Lewellen
School in Dis No—3
Prompt Obediance
by all. there shall
be no fighting swearing
quarreling or vulgar language
on the play ground
or on the Road to or from
School"
Signed by the Board.

For some time before the school was reorganized it had been going steadily downhill, until there were only about seven children in attendance. The school had a divided term, and a new teacher each term, so that the children never had the same teacher more than five successive months. It had a very low rating in the county and was thought a hopeless place to look for improvement. There was no community interest in keeping it going, very few people went to school meetings, sometimes too few to elect a new board, and once only the board itself. Year after year a handful of conscientious

men served on the board and kept some kind of school open.

The resources of the district were sufficient to enable it to have a good school, as it has since proved. There are nine square miles of fertile land and about thirty families in the district. The land is worth about $100.00 per acre. The farms are from 40 to 800 acres in size, with an assessed valuation for the whole district of over one hundred thousand dollars. Corn is the chief crop, and there are several dairy farms, owning prize stock. Most of the farms are less than two hundred acres in size, and a number are farmed by tenants, but all of them can produce a comfortable living for a family, and all are occupied by hard-working, respectable people. But the Porter district sometimes voted a levy as low as twenty cents, and often spent only three or four hundred dollars on its school for the whole year. The salary paid the teacher varied from twenty-five to fifty dollars a month, according to her experience and the difficulty in securing her. The basis of selection was too often the minimum salary demanded.

This situation was no doubt partly due to the fact that Porter was swallowed up by its larger neighbor, Kirksville. Just as the tramps passed through on their way to Kirksville, so the whole

community life was drawn to the bigger town. All roads led there; every family had to go there from time to time to buy and sell, and many had friends and relatives there. There are five country churches in or near Porter district, yet several families went to town to church. The town offered a ready-developed community spirit as well as facilities for social life and a variety of amusement which could only be created in the country by much effort and sacrifice. But an even more disorganizing factor was its offer of good schools within reach of even the little children in many of the Porter homes. Besides the high school, Kirksville has a big state normal school. Farmers are only too ready to assume that any child with a taste for study, in fact with ambition of any sort, will leave the country and go to the town to realize his ambitions. To every child in Porter district the normal school offered a chance to get the education denied him at home. It came to be assumed that every child, if he could, would leave Porter and go in town to school. Moreover, the normal school conducted a model rural school on its grounds to give practice to teachers training for rural work, and to demonstrate the possibilities of the one-room school. In order to have country pupils for this school

a wagon route was established to bring them in. The road chosen for this was the state road running through Porter. With the advantages of the free transportation, free text-books and supplies, a model school building and expert teaching, every family that lived on or near the road naturally sent its children to the city school. This left only about half of the normal school population for the district, and less than half of the normal interest. Parents whose children were so well taken care of in town could not be expected to take an active or responsible interest in the district school, while those parents who lived too far from the main road to be able to send their children to town were discouraged by the difficulties of their situation and by the unfavorable comparison of their school with those in town.

There were two families, however, who had grown up with the neighborhood and who had enough local pride and influence to fight this situation. Before the model school was started they had worked hard to make the school a fit place for their children. They served on the school board, "boarded" the teacher, contributed extra school supplies, transported their own and neighboring children to and from school in bad weather; they had done every-

thing in their power to hold the community and the homes together by trying to build up a good community school. One of these families living on the state road reluctantly took advantage of the model school wagon in order to give their children the best education available; and yet saw that by doing so they were surely breaking up their home and disqualifying their boys for farm life. The mother said that she could see them day by day absorbing town interests, town habits and town ambitions, until she knew that "every day they went they were getting farther away from the farm." The other family lived on the other side of the district and their children were nearly grown up. Realizing keenly the increasing division and weakness due to the rundown school, they fought hard to try to force the model school wagon to change its route, knowing that there would be no improvement in the Porter School until the whole district was dependent on it. Moreover, one of the daughters of this family came home from the Kirksville normal school and taught at Porter. The family took the responsibility for protecting the teachers from the tramps, and time and again cleaned the school house.

Meanwhile Mrs. Marie Turner Harvey, a successful and experienced country teacher, had

had charge of the model school that was drawing so disastrously on the Porter district for its pupils. In spite of her success in Kirksville she was not altogether satisfied with her experiment there. For, as she came to know her pupils and their parents, she began to realize the injury that the school was doing to one rural district in its attempt to furnish a model for them all. That is, she, too, saw her older pupils gradually drifting in interest and sentiment away from their homes and farm life. On the other hand, she was not teaching a *rural* school, and the model school, therefore, could not offer a real demonstration of the possibilities of a one-room country school. Country teachers visited her school, praised it, and then said it ought to be comparatively easy for any teacher to have a good school in such a building, with unlimited equipment and with the pupils brought comfortably to school in all kinds of weather. The school furnished a good demonstration of methods suited to rural life under ideal school conditions, but as these conditions never existed in the Missouri one-room schools, it offered little tangible help to the teacher who had nothing more to work with than the state course of study, a blackboard, and a room full of children.

Mrs. Harvey, however, looked for results more from the spirit than from the machinery of her teaching and believed that, holding to the same general principles, she could get the same pedagogical results in even the most poorly equipped school. And she was convinced that only in the country itself could she get the social results that ought to be part of any country school. She was giving her pupils a good working knowledge of all sorts of useful things, but she was forced to disregard the home environment of the children. She had a school which was not related to the actual lives of her pupils, nor adjusted to their particular needs, but was supposed to meet the needs of country life in general, which is quite unlike any particular country life. The failure of the normal and model schools to give the teachers what they needed taught her the extent of the need, and developed definite ideas of the way this help might be effectively given.

Mrs. Harvey made it her business to become acquainted with the parents of her pupils, and with the conditions in the community. Most of her pupils came from the Porter School district. While Mrs. Harvey was getting acquainted with the families of the district, they had come to know her and to appreciate her as a teacher.

In the summer of 1912 the directors of the school asked Mrs. Harvey to come to Porter to teach. She was promised a free hand to develop the school and the board agreed that she would need three years in which to reorganize and demonstrate the practicability of her ideal of a socialized rural school community. Mrs. Harvey accepted the offer on the conditions that a house where she could make her home the year round be found for her in the community, and that she should have the active coöperation of the families who had worked for a better school.

At this time Mrs. Harvey believed that her work would be done when the reorganization of the school was completed and when she had successfully demonstrated that a one-room school with no equipment could be made to meet the educational needs of a farm community. Three years, she thought, ought to offer sufficient time in which to work out methods to overcome most of the difficulties prevailing in one-room schools. Mrs. Harvey has been teaching in the Porter School for six years now, and, although she has accomplished even more than she dreamed of at first, she has not yet developed the school to the point where she thinks it is functioning to its fullest extent for the community welfare.

Mrs. Harvey had grown up in the country and had taught in rural schools; she knew the conditions under which the teacher usually has to live and work; she knew the apathy and stagnation of farm life, knew its indifference to good schools, and saw that until the schools were good there would never be any really effective weapon for changing conditions. The first step in the reorganization of the school must be a new attitude of the community towards the teacher and of the teacher towards her school. No teacher could help to bring up children with a love of country life, belief in the future of farming, and the enthusiasm and initiative necessary to enable them to develop their environment, when she herself came to the school as a temporary makeshift. The majority of rural teachers are prevented by their living conditions from settling permanently in one community or identifying themselves with the local life and interests. Communities look upon their teachers as outsiders, usually find their care a burden, and are apt to take a somewhat patronizing attitude towards them because of their small salaries. Mrs. Harvey believed that the teacher in a community should be as much a part of that community as any other person living in it. Therefore she insisted

upon a house of her own. As a mere boarder in the house of some family, her work would not have been possible, nor if she had made the long daily trip to the school from her home in town. All the agencies that are working for improved rural schools are agreed upon the necessity of supplying proper living conditions for the teachers.

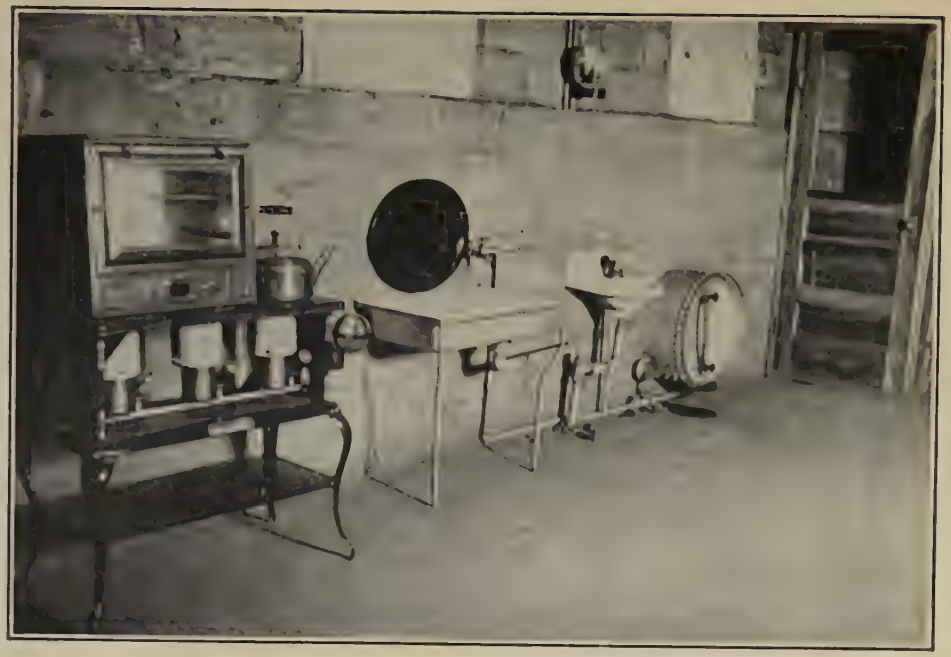
Porter community and Mrs. Harvey were agreed in regarding her work there as an experiment, and there was more than one family that prophesied that the experiment would fail long before the three years were up. They argued that Porter had always had a poor and struggling school, that it would be useless to try to change, that children who wanted fancy schooling had better go to Kirksville anyway since it would cost them less, and that the school had been good enough for them, so they guessed it would be good enough for the children. They thought it inappropriate that a high-salaried teacher from a normal college should give up her position for one in the country paying only fifty dollars a month, and felt that such a course must have some ulterior motive. The new teacher and the school board who had hired her were accused of every conceivable motive, from a desire to try "crazy, new-fangled" methods

to the really serious crime of a plot to defraud a district in the habit of spending $350.00 a year on its school, of vast sums of school taxes. To many people the idea that anyone could give up town life and good pay for fifty dollars a month and a tumble-down shack, because of belief in an idea, was unthinkable. They opposed her coming violently not because they had any reason against it or anything else to propose, but merely because such things are not done. That there must be a "nigger in the woodpile" somewhere they were convinced, and it is only within the past year or so that the bitterest opponents have ceased to look for something irregular in the conduct of the school to satisfy their idea of her motive in coming, and at the same time to serve as an excuse for ridding them of something they did not understand.

But some families had a very definite conception of why Mrs. Harvey came to Porter, and of what they wanted her to accomplish for them. Looking at it merely as a matter of convenience, her coming would be a great help to the whole community. The people on the state road could send their children to the local school instead of having them take the long ride into town, and still feel that they were safe. The parents who had sent their children to Porter

before were, of course, gainers in every way; the increased size of the school was enough to convert most doubters. The nearness of Porter to the state normal college and the use of the model school by half the community had given the farmers of Porter an unusual understanding and appreciation of good teaching. They knew that in Mrs. Harvey they were getting an expert and experienced teacher, where they had had chiefly untrained girls before. They knew that Mrs. Harvey would not long submit to the conditions that had prevailed in the school house; that some method would have to be found to repair the building in order to keep it clean and warm, and that the tramp nuisance would have to be met. They also looked forward to having the same teacher for three years.

All these were reasons enough for most families to welcome Mrs. Harvey to Porter. But there was a group to whom these things, however desirable, were not the most important. These were the leaders who had first suggested that Mrs. Harvey come to Porter. They were the farmers who liked country life, who believed that the country offers advantages never to be found in the city; that farming is a dignified and interesting profession, giving scope to am-



THE NEW BASEMENT, REFURNISHED AND READY FOR BUSINESS

bition, and demanding skill and intelligence. They saw all the young people of high school age moving away from the district; a neighborhood divided against itself, overworked, and lacking in any unified social interest or community spirit; a district where living conditions were rapidly becoming so bad that the chances of economic success were lessening, and hopes of establishing permanent, comfortable and happy homes were disappearing. These people wanted a good school for their children, but even more than that, they wanted a good *country* school. They had pride and ambition in their home and their occupation as well as in their children. They believed that a good school in the country would tend to keep their children at home, would give them the education that is necessary to make a success of farming, and enable them to find for themselves the interests and connections which are necessary for a contented and well-balanced life. They hoped also that a good school would draw Porter district together, and check the disintegration constantly increasing because of the division in the community and the proximity of Kirksville. One family especially felt that the reorganization of the school was their last chance to hold the family together and to educate their chil-

dren for the life which they loved and believed in.

Naturally this group of people was ready and eager to give Mrs. Harvey every assistance within its power. And every kind of assistance would be needed, for the demonstration had to be made on the usual sum spent on the school. Due to this nucleus of determined supporters, Mrs. Harvey entered her work with much confidence in her ability to succeed under conditions even worse than the average. There was no question of failure in the class room; she had taught for many years and in all types of schools, and knew rural conditions thoroughly. Her class-room problem was to show other teachers how, starting with nothing, and always with the meagerest equipment, they could use the best methods and give a diversified curriculum. But this was not new to her. The main problem to her and her supporters was to develop a school which should function adequately as a vital part of the community. This was a particularly difficult problem, because it involved creating not only the school, but almost the community itself. Hopeless as this problem looked, it was made easier for Mrs. Harvey because she believed that the methods

best for a class room were also the best for creating a community.

Mrs. Harvey has achieved remarkable success because the people of Porter have fulfilled their part of the task, turning from the city to unite their own neighborhood. Without a leader to point the way, the school and district would undoubtedly have remained in their former state. But the mere appointment of an expert teacher and clever manager will never be enough to remake a community. The people must evolve their own community; and community life must be a necessity to them. With a teacher-leader to give the initial impetus and the practical help needed by a group unused to team work, every district ought to be able to do as much and more than Porter has done.

Mrs. Harvey came to Porter not with a ready-made plan for class-room lessons, and a schedule of clubs and social activities for the adults, but with a firm belief that in Porter there lay the possibilities for the development of a real social spirit which, when once awakened, would be powerful enough to build up for itself the methods of expression that were best suited to its needs. Everything that has been done has had a basis in some fundamental need of the community. At first her only attempt was to

get the school into proper running order. But in everything that she undertook Mrs. Harvey took the whole group into her confidence; she told them what she wanted to do, how it could be done, and asked for help. By sharing responsibility with as many of the community as she could get to listen, she rapidly built up the habit of coöperation. Parents were no longer allowed to think their duty done when their children were sent off to school in the morning. Mrs. Harvey showed them definitely how to make the school a better place for the children, and when necessary helped them make it so. When the district saw what it had accomplished by working together in the school, it was ready to work as a unit on some of its general interests and needs. In everything, she has emphasized the power and value of coöperation. It is a familiar word to the smallest children in the school, and the pupils have chosen it for their school motto. What has been accomplished has been done not by Mrs. Harvey for her neighbors, but by every one working together.

Mrs. Harvey believes that it is the function of the teacher-leader to initiate this coöperation in a community; and it is through such work as this that she believes stable, progressive and

prosperous farming populations will grow up. Certainly the picture of Porter to-day is one of hope and promise for the rising generation of farmers; while five years ago it was one of the most discouraging of disintegrated communities. The credit for most of the change belongs to Mrs. Harvey, and yet if she were to leave, the community would not slump to its former state. By showing them how to work as a unit, she has shown them how to convert the promise of country life into a reality. She has never done things *for* the people of Porter, she has done things *with* them. And the changes that have come have affected not merely a spot here and there in the lives of the people, but have given them the power to change their whole lives. She has not attempted to change everything at once, but has always worked slowly enough to be sure that whatever was undertaken would meet an easily recognized want in the community. For a long time after she came to Porter, she worked only on the school; any wider influence came only as it grew out of school problems. The next step after the coöperative interest of the community in the school was firmly established, came in the social life and conditions in the district, and last in the gradual growth of the community to

the understanding of the need of economic reforms. The needs of the children and the school lessons have always been the starting point in changes, and each thing has been allowed to develop naturally from the last.

CHAPTER IV

THE STORY OF THE NEW PORTER SCHOOL

A HANDFUL of progressive parents had hired a new teacher to come to Porter to reorganize the district school, to make of it the best possible place for their children to receive the kind of education they needed. The teacher had agreed to come on two conditions, first that she should have a free hand for three years, and second, that she should have a home of her own in the community.

The problem of finding the best way to reorganize still had to be settled. Mrs. Harvey already knew many of the people of the district, having taught their children in the model school; she had seen the Porter school house and knew many of the problems that would have to be solved. She was determined first and last to have a school which would be a demonstration of the possibilities of education in a one-room building with country taxes and country salaries. So when she signed the school board's contract she agreed to come for the

first year at a salary of fifty dollars a month. This was in the summer of 1912.

For her home the school board offered Mrs. Harvey the one empty house the district boasted. This was a tumble-down cottage the owner had planned to tear down, because it was so dilapidated. The school board persuaded him to offer it instead to Mrs. Harvey at a rental of five dollars a month. The building was in very bad condition, doors off, sagging floors and holes in the roof; the wife of the farmer who owned it persuaded him that it would be a useless expense to repair it, because there was not the slightest chance that a teacher like Mrs. Harvey would stay more than one year in Porter. The board knew that this was an inadequate way to meet Mrs. Harvey's condition of a home in the district, but it was the only possible way of meeting it at all. With these simple preparations and the personal promise of the more interested parents of all the help in their power, the district had made every contribution to the experiment of the new school possible to it at the time.

Mrs. Harvey appreciated what they had done for her, and yet she had no intention of teaching any longer than was absolutely necessary in a building such as the school house then was.

THE FIRST TEACHER'S COTTAGE IN MISSOURI, PICTURED BEFORE AND AFTER MRS. HARVEY'S OCCUPANCY

A comfortable building, kept in decent repair, with sufficient conveniences to make it attractive and to serve as a demonstration of housing possibilities for the district was an essential part of her program. Although the building was over twenty years old and the school board was beginning to talk about the need for a new one, Mrs. Harvey had many reasons to discourage plans for a new school and to interest the people in making the best out of what they had. Chief of these reasons perhaps was the thought that the days of the district school are numbered; consolidation will come rapidly in regions where people have been made to appreciate the value and possibilities of country education by a few years of vital teaching in their old one-room buildings. A demonstration, which started out by demanding a new building, would, she felt, lose most of its value.

What was needed was someone to take what could be found in any rural district, and to show how it could be made into a first-rate school. Mrs. Harvey could not do this alone. It would be necessary for her to get help for the simple remodelling of the building she had in mind. In this necessity she saw a splendid opportunity to get a grip on the second part of

her program, that of awakening community spirit.

Shortly after she had arranged to teach in Porter, the school board called a mass meeting in the school house for patrons to hear the new teacher tell what she hoped to accomplish. Mrs. Harvey took this opportunity to point out to the parents the futility of trying to have a good school in such a hideous and dirty place as this building. She told them of the idea that the mere learning of reading, writing and arithmetic did not constitute an education for children; that country children had as much right to demand a well-rounded education which should teach them how to live, as city children; and that with their help she meant to give it to their children. As a first step, she wanted to make the school room a convenient and attractive place. She spoke to them of the danger to the children's health, in the heating system, the dirty well, the unlocked outbuildings, and the unshaded windows. She pointed out to them the impossibility of any teacher's putting the proper amount of time and energy into her actual teaching if she had always to be fighting against falling plaster and a leaking roof and had to be cleaning up after tramps. The school board had saved up some tax money in order

to make the most necessary repairs on the building, and they now offered to spend it according to Mrs. Harvey's ideas. The board had fifty dollars which they spoke of spending for a cyclone cellar in the school yard. The building had become so badly out of repair that they felt there was danger to the children in the recurring tornadoes that sweep the plains. Mrs. Harvey suggested that a cellar be put under the school room, thus making it possible to heat by furnace and adding a room to the school. This agreed upon, Mrs. Harvey offered a plan by which the community could at once make their school house into a comfortable and safe building. The men themselves were to contribute the necessary labor; then there would be enough money for the materials for the cellar, the heating and plumbing systems, repair of roof and redecoration. Most of the community responded and agreed to do themselves all the work necessary to put the building in proper condition.

The small group of doubters, who were unable to understand Mrs. Harvey's motives for coming to Porter, were taking a skeptical and discouraging attitude. Now when they saw that actual changes in the school plant were in progress their fear of becoming involved in what

seemed to them useless expense became crystallized into active opposition. The plans for improvements seemed to them so out of proportion to their conception of the needs of a district school that they came to feel as they watched the plans develop and expand that things of sinister import were under way; that the work was actually illegal and that if it went on the whole district would be ruined. Their opposition was at first due to the fact that they had well-established political habits antagonistic to the plans of the group that were actively working for the school. When they saw things done that cost money they read signs of graft; and it was not long before they were opposing on principle every move of the patrons of the school. Their feeling of bitterness was increased by the fact that some of the families that had sided with them in the past were working hard for the school. In fact most of the families with children of school age flocked to the new school regardless of their political affiliations or of the neighborhood feuds that had divided the district in the past. The opponents of the school began searching the school statutes, in the hopes of finding some instance where either the teacher or a member of the board had overstepped his authority. They started a petition

for a special school meeting in an effort to vote down this spending of the surplus school funds for improvements, and they threatened to appear with an injunction to stop work as soon as it was begun on the grounds.

Meanwhile plans were completed for a cement cellar, a furnace, a water system and for the work of papering, painting, and shingling necessary to put the building in shape. This included grading the yard, rebuilding the toilets, putting up dark-colored, adjustable window shades and lowering the blackboards so that the younger children could reach them. The school board was to spend the money for necessary materials including the furnace, and the men of the neighborhood were to begin the work as soon as they could arrange to leave their farm work for short periods.

Mrs. Harvey left for a summer vacation feeling that she had already made good headway toward solving one of her main problems, that of teaching the community the meaning of cooperation. The very fact that the district did not have money enough to hire men to do all the necessary work on the building helped the beginning of the growth of a real community spirit. To get the work done the district had to plan as a whole and to ask each individual

to contribute what he could for the good of the whole. Then when the actual work was started each individual was expected to join the group working in the school yard whenever he could spare any time from his farm. The men came to know each other better than they ever had before; they learned each other's strong and weak points, and in watching the school house grow they came to have a realization of their power as a community. When the handful of doubters began to show their active opposition, the workers were drawn more closely together; their work took on a new value and the school became a cause to fight for. If there had been any danger that the reorganization of the school would stop half way because of loss of interest, that danger disappeared as soon as its opponents became active.

One of the farmers' wives of the district kept a diary of the work on the school house done by the men in the summer of 1912. The diary begins August 21st with the following entry: "Rumored that improvements on school house will be stopped by an injunction suit." August 24th:—"Heard this morning of petition being circulated asking for special election to determine will of patrons regarding basement and furnace proposition. So the school work

was begun by hauling four loads of sand. Meeting of the board held at once, clerk included; they went to town and paid for the furnace, hoping that by so doing the trouble might be avoided. The sand was also hauled to-day with that purpose in view. The petition was signed by about twenty-eight patrons. The board consulted the prosecuting attorney, who said the board was clearly within its legal rights and to go ahead; that they had blocked the game by hauling the sand." Another entry says:—"Twenty-two loads of sand hauled to-day."

September 4th:—"Commenced work on school house by hauling cement blocks, cement, and raising blocks. Eleven men worked. The house was raised ready for excavating. First photos taken. There was no trouble, though there had been a threat to have papers served whenever they began actual work."

On September 11th, the school meeting demanded by Mrs. Harvey's opponents was held, and the vote was sixteen to one in favor of finishing the improvements. An expert was hired to superintend the work of installing the furnace; the school directors had intended to pay for this, but the men who had volunteered their services decided to take up a subscription and raised the whole sum.

School opened on October 14th; there were no steps into the school house; the teacher's chair was put in front of the door and children and adults climbed over that to get in. The yard was full of piles of clay and debris, the painting and papering were not finished and most of the finishing touches were still to be added. The entry in the diary for December 12th says: "Little things finished to-day." Mrs. Harvey had made the directors see the necessity of having a telephone in the school and some of the men worked through most of November getting that up. They had to put up new poles as well as wires between the school and the teacher's cottage, because some of the opponents of the school had relatives who were influential in the local telephone company and refused to add one more phone to the wire that already served the whole neighborhood.

By the time school opened, the entire neighborhood was enthusiastic over the possibilities of the new school. Their children were going to have an attractive, comfortable place to go to school, and the adults through their work for the school had already made a good beginning towards the community spirit and neighborliness, which to so many of them had become a necessary part of their program of bringing

Re-roofing the Schoolhouse in 1917 by Co-operative Labor

up their children to appreciate the possibilities of farm life. Another entry in the same diary says: "Mr. X says now that he believes it the best thing that ever happened in the neighborhood; it has done more to draw us together than anything else. To see how all these men are neglecting their work at home to do this certainly convinces one that they are taking an interest and were sincere in offering their services."

In one summer Porter succeeded in bringing about a complete material reorganization of its school. From a building that was famous through many districts for its condition of extreme neglect, the Porter school house became almost over night, a model demonstration of what can be done in any or every "box-car" school in the country. It is true that the transformation cost considerably more than the hundred or so dollars that the school directors had been accumulating to spend on patching up the worst features of the old building. But considering what was accomplished the cost was very low, and not one cent above the ordinary school taxes was spent; there was no special levy, and the board did not go into debt at the expense of the future. When the work was finished it was completely paid for. Many things were donated

to the school; one hundred and nineteen dollars in money was raised by subscription, and local dealers gladly gave reductions on some of the things they sold the school. Nothing that was put in is expensive or unsuitable to the school in a small community. The school costs more than it used to under the old régime. But a small increase in cost has yielded a disproportionately large return in value to the children and to the community.

At this time there were a few model rural schools in Missouri, but this was the first attempt to take a rundown district and reorganize it, making a first-class school and at the same time establishing a community center. Mrs. Harvey saw a great deal of work ahead of her, and she expected to stay in Porter only three years. Therefore she wanted to begin her actual work with her equipment in as good shape as possible.

Any one acquainted with rural conditions knows that one of the main difficulties that the rural schools have to contend with is the unwillingness of farmers to spend anything more than the absolute minimum in taxes. It takes a well-developed public spirit to make people cheerful about giving their money back to the government. Most farmers have little or none

of this feeling and a great deal of the opposite feeling; that most taxes are spent in dishonest ways; that the government is too little concerned with the welfare of the farmer; and that it is a rather dangerous thing to try to work with other people anyway; the best way to get along is to fight shy of anything that looks like change and to work as hard as possible on their own land.

If Mrs. Harvey had been less familiar with Porter and its needs, she would have gone more slowly. But she had lived next door to the district for years, and had been teaching nearly half the children of the district in the model school in Kirksville. It was her intimate acquaintance with conditions in Porter that had enabled her to formulate many of her ideas about the one-room school. She was in no sense rushing in on unfamiliar ground and persuading the district to undertake a program founded only on theories, regardless of the particular needs of that community. One of the reasons she had moved to Porter was because she saw that it was a great mistake to try to work out a pattern rural school, which should be applied to every district, whatever the conditions. She knew that whatever she suggested aimed to supply some actual need of the Porter situ-

ation. In another district one of the things that was desirable in that particular situation was to hurry as fast as possible the material improvements. A program of reorganization might postpone that part of the work until much later, especially if building and equipment are more satisfactory than they were at Porter. There can be no doubt that all districts must learn to spend more than three to four hundred dollars a year on their schools, before they can expect a very satisfactory result. Yet Mrs. Harvey was probably right in thinking that one of the best and quickest ways of teaching this lesson is for a few pioneer experiments to prove that the money is well spent by getting concrete results as rapidly as possible.

The Porter building is now twenty-five years old. Five years ago it was falling to pieces from neglect. But in its present state of repair there is no reason why it should not last another twenty-five years. Surely that is the kind of lesson in economy that every district can learn to advantage.

The following report of the Porter School was sent to Mrs. Harvey by the superintendent of schools for Adair County before she began her teaching there. There had been four teachers during the past three years; the same young

woman for the three spring terms, and three different teachers for the winter terms. Their salaries had ranged from thirty-five to forty-seven dollars. The levy for the past two years had been forty cents on the hundred dollars, amounting to three hundred and eighty-seven dollars from the district. The state contributions had brought the total sum up to five hundred and ninety-one dollars. The total number of children of school age in the district were 56; number enrolled at Porter, 23; with an average attendance of 13. He goes on to say: "The general rank of this school is below the average. The equipment compares very well with other schools in the county. Physical conditions are poor, *i.e.* house and outbuildings. No blinds at windows, house cold, plaster off, wall dirty, stove in center; outhouses very poor. The yard is very pretty and can be made beautiful."

When the school opened on October 14th, conditions were already so radically different that the superintendent would have had to rank the school above the average. There was an expert teacher in charge, who had not only agreed to stay three years, but was planning to live in the district the year round. The building was firmly anchored to a concrete foundation. The front door was rehung so that it would shut, the win-

dows had their full quota of panes. The outhouses were moved to opposite sides of the yard, cleaned, painted, and fitted with doors that could be locked against tramps. The grading of the yard was under way and the coal shed was transformed into a barn for the school wagon team.

Inside the changes were even more marked, only the absolutely essential things having been done on the outside. For winter would soon come on and the interior needed to be as comfortable as possible. The vestibule was provided with racks for the children's things. The stairs led from it into the basement. The building had been raised high enough so that there was room for a number of small windows at the top of the basement, which made it light enough to use for class work on all but dark days. The walls and floor were sealed with thick cement, so that the room was perfectly dry and comfortable for the children. The furnace and coal bin were placed at one end of the room, roughly partitioned off to keep the room clean. A long board table was built at the same time the rest of the carpentry work was done. The chairs for this room were donated by a local furniture dealer. Full size folding chairs were chosen so that they could be easily moved about, and extra

chairs would be available when the building was used for community gatherings. A pressure tank connecting with the newly cleaned well, a patent drinking fountain, and a kitchen sink were installed. For these improvements Mrs. Harvey was responsible, the work was volunteer except for necessary expert service; the money for this was raised by contributions. The basement now boasts a coal-oil stove, a kitchen table, a cupboard of dishes, which were put in by the women's club for their own use. Some inexpensive blackboards hang on the walls. Tools and supplies are stored on shelves or in a small closet. Children's individual towels are kept on a rack in an inconspicuous place. Even the smallest children are taught how to use a first-aid cabinet, which hangs within their reach.

Upstairs the hideous iron stove is gone; in its place are several inconspicuous registers. The plaster was mended, and the walls papered with a pleasing neutral shade of oatmeal paper. This paper has lasted five years and is still clean and in good condition. The woodwork was cleaned of the dark smokey paint, and repainted a golden brown. A new book case was built in and the old one repaired. The desks were scrubbed and revarnished, and the extra ones removed. The platform for the teacher's desk

was taken away and a new teacher's desk and chair placed against the wall at the front of the room. On the rear wall hung an eight-day clock. An organ and a phonograph were loaned. For the past three years the community has been renting a piano as part of the regular school equipment. The over bright light that streamed in the windows on both sides was controlled by adjustable shades. The two doors opening into the vestibule were provided with glass panels to allow light to enter the rear of the room.

To a teacher used to town conditions most of these things are taken for granted as necessities. But when we think of the Porter school building of the past and the conditions that prevail in the majority of our one-room schools, we realize how revolutionary this seemed to the neighborhood. The stove the school had been using was bought twenty-four years ago, and with one exception that is the last record of any money spent for improvements or repairs. About ten years ago the board had built a small shed in the school yard, for storing coal, or putting up a horse or two. Of course small sums must have been spent from time to time to patch up things that became hopelessly broken or worn out, but there had been no effort to improve or repair. The simplest plan of

THE "BUS" THAT VISITS OUTLYING HOMES. A MODEL OF ITS KIND. PATRONS FURNISH THEIR OWN DRIVERS AND HORSES

up-keep would have prevented such extreme deterioration.

Mrs. Harvey's plans for material improvements did not stop with the overhauling of the building. She intended that a healthful, clean, and attractive school house should become a necessity to the district. This much established, she hoped to be able to add gradually to the equipment of the school until she could demonstrate that the best kind of school had just as much place in the country as in the city. The building was in order and she meant to keep it that way so that any future surplus could be spent on new things.

Mrs. Harvey had arranged with the directors for janitor service to be paid for with school funds instead of out of her own pocket according to the usual country school custom. So for two and a half dollars a month she hired as janitor one of the older boys, who was planning to go back to school for another year. This was not enough money to enable a boy to come to school when his work was badly needed on the farm; and the first winter three boys had to be taught how to do the work, in order to have a janitor in school every day. Since then the board has paid five dollars a month, and there has been no trouble in finding a boy who could be depended

upon to be regular. The janitor gets to school before the others in time to start the fire, and he also regulates the furnace all day. He washes the boards, and sweeps and dusts every day; once a week he helps the teacher and the older pupils wash the basement and school-room floor. The floor of the room is very old and splintery, but by a thorough oiling and sweeping, it is kept in excellent shape with very little work. The older children share much of the work of caring for the premises; they are responsible for keeping the lamps cleaned and filled; and they all understand the furnace, the rules for ventilating, and lighting, and they know where everything is kept.

At first there was much doubtful headshaking, because it was feared that tramps would break into the school house and undo all the work. But it was agreed that every attempt should be made to keep them out and strong locks were put on the doors and windows which were fastened each night. The first winter tramps broke in and slept in the building three times, but did little damage. One night the nuisance was put an end to once for all by the arrest of three tramps who had broken in and were sentenced to a short jail term. These three men stopped one night at a farm near the school

and asked to be taken in for the night. The farmer refused them; then they demanded the keys to the school house, saying they had planned to sleep there, but had moved on when they saw it was locked. The farmer, remembering the threats to burn barns if the school was locked, became frightened, and volunteered the information that they would find a key at the teacher's cottage. They went there and were turned away by Mrs. Harvey, and then went back to the school house and broke in. Meanwhile Mrs. Harvey telephoned her suspicions to some of the school directors, who quietly followed the tramps and saw them break in. They went to the nearest house and telephoned for the sheriff and soon had the tramps in jail. This is the last time it has even been attempted, and there have never been any of the threatened outrages.

The lesson of coöperation has been learned so well that the building is in perfect repair to-day, the paper and paint look fresh and new, the window shades work and are used, and if a pane of glass is broken, it is sure to have been a real accident.

The yard is always tidy, and gradually play apparatus has been put up, until there is a very creditable outdoor gymnasium. The second fall

three of the farmers contributed the material to put up a giant stride and a flag pole, and someone else gave the school a volley ball. Since then they have added some parallel bars, and the posts and baskets for basket ball. Improvements have gone on inside the school house, too. The desks are used only for the older children now and half the room is furnished for the little children with moveable tables and chairs of different sizes. Mrs. Harvey has invented a series of low cupboards on castors that are used for primary supplies and for seats for the adults at community gatherings. By very careful buying, inventing and contriving, she has amassed a stock of school supplies that would do credit to any school.

The Porter school building is one of the most valuable of Mrs. Harvey's contributions to rural education. She has shown how any community can have as good a school plant as it wants, and that this plant can be made from the building at hand at a minimum expense. The force of her lesson is emphasized in her own neighborhood to-day, by comparing a near-by school house with Porter. The other building was built four years ago, and cost $1,100.00. It is built according to the plans worked out by a state normal school for a model rural school building,

and one might naturally expect Porter to suffer by comparison. But the building has evidently never had any regular care, and the result is, that in spite of a more modern plan, and a much more substantial type of building, the school looks much older. The plaster is off the walls in patches, the wall paper is streaked with water, the windows are thick with dust, and the floor looks as if it were washed once a year. The furnace was on the same floor with the school room, an arrangement which the teacher said she thought poor, as it was very hard to keep the room warm enough. Although it was summer the door to the furnace room was standing open, and coal was strewn all over the floor; the tools were piled up in a corner of the cloak room and coal dust had been tracked all over the hallways. In a few years more the building will be in a tumble-down condition, unless changes are made in its care. The district voted bonds for the building, which are not yet paid for, yet in a very short time they will probably have to spend a considerable sum on repairs.

There can be no doubt that, looked at merely from the point of view of economy, keeping the school house in good condition pays. If local boards would realize this and provide for janitor service and then would hold their teachers

just as responsible for seeing to the up-keep of the building as for covering the state curriculum, the results would be beneficial to teachers, pupils, and taxpayers. It is unreasonable to expect an inexperienced, underpaid teacher, who expects to stay in a school only three months, on her own initiative to set right a situation like the above, when it means that she herself would have to do all the work involved in cleaning up. But it is equally unreasonable of school boards to complain because a more capable teacher will not stay year after year, when they refuse to do anything to improve such conditions. As long as physical conditions in the majority of rural schools are so bad that good teachers won't stay and poor ones cannot learn, anything which contributes to the solution of the problem will have great practical value.

If it were possible to give children an education in a dirty, tumble down building the problem would not deserve so much thought, and Mrs. Harvey would not have put so much of her time, energies and resources into the material side of her work at Porter. But she believes with most other students of the rural problem that the farming population will never be able to hold its own against the call of town life until

it learns the lesson of respect for material things. Farmers have learned that their animals must be kept clean and comfortable, but they will never be able to profit by the added prosperity this will bring them until they demand before everything else that their own lives shall be dignified and comfortable. Mrs. Harvey believes that it is the function of the school to teach this and that where the lesson is needed, it should be taught in the community so that every one may profit by it. It is a lesson that is learned, not from text-books, or from formal statements, but from meeting the practical problem of how to enrich their lives building upon what they have. Every improvement that was put into the Porter school house had, therefore, a double function. It was designed to make the building a fit place for the teacher to teach in and the children to work in, but it was also designed as a demonstration for the whole community of the way the ordinary things of life can be arranged conveniently and attractively.

Most of the farm houses in that part of Missouri do not have basements, so there was an added reason for putting a basement in the school house. Every farmer or farmer's wife who has been inside the Porter school knows

that a basement makes a house warmer, and gives a lot of convenient space for storing, and he is pretty sure to have decided that if he ever has another house it will be one with a basement and a furnace. Heating a house with stoves is hard work in the cold winters of most of our states; and it usually means extremes of temperature and bad air, with resulting ill-health. So Mrs. Harvey had a heating system put in the school house, that would not only do for that building, but would be obviously suited to any house in the district. The sink in the basement has been used a lot by the school, but it has also served to show the farm women how very much easier their work would be if they had running water and a waste pipe. The sink, the tank and the simple waste pipe that requires no cess-pool were purposely chosen, because they were within the means of the homes of the district. When the school building was improved there was only one house in the district that had running water inside; now there are several. The drinking fountain was put in because Mrs. Harvey felt that children and adults alike lacked any knowledge of even the simplest rules of hygiene. Children in country schools usually went all day without drinking any water, and they almost never had any regular

Girls' Toilet Before and After Reconstruction. Note the Vines and Shrubs, the Path of Cinders, and Blue Grass Instead of Weeds in the Yard

habits of drinking between meals. When the fountain was in all the pupils were sent at both morning and afternoon recess to get a drink. As a result most of the colds and indigestion which used to be so common in the school have disappeared. Mrs. Harvey wanted play apparatus in the school yard from the very beginning, because the children got plenty of hard work, but almost no healthy exercise. She wanted them to learn how to play and she wanted them to do things out doors that would need all around exercise to bring bodily relaxation.

The things that were done in the school room were done with an eye to their usefulness as object lessons for the whole community. The walls were papered because everyone in Porter uses wall paper, but a paper was chosen that would look well in any room, that would make a good back-ground for pictures, and that could be had even more inexpensively than the papers that were in common use. The pictures hung on the wall have been chosen because they would be appropriate anywhere, were interesting enough in subject matter to appeal, and would serve as undisputed models of good taste. The very sweeping compound that is used for the floor and the scrub-pail were selected be-

cause they do the work they are designed for with the least possible effort on the part of the person who is using them.

The teacher's cottage has served as a community demonstration of the ways to make housework both pleasanter and easier. Mrs. Harvey lives in an even smaller and more inconvenient house than most of those in the district, and yet by a careful study of the work that was to be done and the needs of her family, Mrs. Harvey's mother has worked out domestic arrangements and a program of work that give the greatest comfort with the least effort. The possibility of making their work easier had not even occurred to most of the farmers' wives; they had never looked about their houses to see if they were making or saving work for themselves. All this has been truly educational, Mrs. Harvey believes, because until farmers learn the fundamental lesson that they will advance their prosperity and the interest of their lives only as they learn to conquer their material environment, there is not much use trying to teach them literature or even arithmetic.

The first step in the reorganization of the Porter school was the repair of the school house, changing it from a dirty, unsanitary, unattractive one-room shed into a two-room build-

LIBRARY

ing admirably suited to the needs of the children, and quite adequate as a gathering place for the whole community. In doing this Mrs. Harvey accomplished many other things that she considers essential parts of the work of a rural teacher, and, moreover, made a demonstration of what can be done with almost any one-room school house, with no more outlay than is at the command of any district. Perhaps the biggest thing that the rebuilding of the house started in Porter was the community interest which came with the volunteer and cooperative labor of the men. A vital interest in the school was developed that could never have existed if the men had merely paid for the building. And a district where each family had lived isolated, where there were no community traditions and no community spirit or pride, was drawn together into a working unit with a common cause and a method of expression. This was the biggest thing because it is the first essential in starting any piece of work and because farmers lack coöperative habits more than any other group. Once they realize the force of group action and the advantages to be gained from it, they are started on the road to self-education.

CHAPTER V

THE GROWTH OF THE COMMUNITY

Mrs. Harvey believes every school house is a community investment and that the community should demand a far greater return on what it has put in than it does at present. The prevailing notion is that a school building is for school purposes only, regardless of the fact that many a district goes heavily into debt to build it. The building stands idle eighteen hours every school day, two whole days each week and from three to six months during the year. Instead of contributing to the life of the community through community service during all these idle hours, the building is deteriorating from lack of use. Since the school house is the seat of very little activity there is very little general interest in its condition; untidiness and uncleanliness are the rule, and result in a steady depreciation, which makes even a small initial investment a very expensive one. Before many years it becomes necessary to vote the money for a new building. Meanwhile, the children are

suffering from the condition of their school house. Finally the neighborhood conscience is aroused and a new building appears, which goes the way of the old one.

Having obtained a new building for the Porter school by the inexpensive method of rehabilitating the old one, Mrs. Harvey was determined that it should yield the whole community a fair return for the work done upon it. She used the strong interest in the school awakened by this coöperative work as the starting point in teaching the community the many advantages of demanding an adequate return on its school investment. It was not necessary to make a definite attack upon the old ideas of the limited use of the building; everyone was eager and curious to see the new school and to hear all about the new things happening in it, so they were glad to make new opportunities to meet there. By making these chances for the community to come together in the school house Mrs. Harvey has fed the interest in the school until at present it would be impossible for the district to slip back to its old ways. Without this interest she could never have developed the school to its present point of educational efficiency, nor built up, as she has, the present community use of the school plant.

As Mrs. Harvey's work progressed, she saw every day new community needs and new possibilities for the extension of the school service. But she never made the mistake of going too rapidly. She had no ready-made program for the use of a school as a community center when she came to Porter. Even after she saw the kind of center that would mean most to them she did not try to establish it at one stroke. She let it grow gradually as the people themselves became conscious of each new possibility. It is, therefore, from their own growing realization of their existence as a community that they have developed under her guiding hand the remarkable number of community activities that now center around the school house. The history of the community's relation to the school during the first year shows better than any abstract discussion the value of Mrs. Harvey's method: that of leading the community to see its own needs, her own work being that of an executive secretary, rather than the initiator and final authority. It is true that at first very little of the reorganization of the Porter school was not conceived, planned, and carried out by Mrs. Harvey; moreover, as long as she remains there she will be the community leader. But it is a leadership that merely points the way, not one

that expects or would accept blind following. First she does nothing which does not meet some need the community recognizes; and then she always demands the help of others, insisting that they take a full share in the responsibility.

After the summer mass meeting held to plan the rebuilding of the school house, the community did not meet formally at the school house until the Christmas party; although the work of getting things in order was progressing steadily. Early in December Mrs. Harvey noticed that the children were talking about the Christmas tree parties that were going to be held in the neighboring school houses. Their lives were so lacking in opportunities for social expression that the approaching celebration was of tremendous importance. Mrs. Harvey was familiar with the type of Christmas party that is usual in the district school and wanted to give her pupils something more suitable to the occasion. She realized that the usual party, where the spirit of Christmas was forgotten in the crude jokes of a coarse Santa Claus, a long program of "pieces" by the children, designed to give as many pupils as possible chances for speaking, and a "treat" by the teacher, whose meager salary forced her to sacrifice all stand-

ards of quality for quantity, is in no sense a proper celebration of the season. But she also realized that a community was right in demanding that Christmas should not be neglected. Meaningless and boisterous parties were the rule because the people and the teacher had not the resources and imagination to supply anything better, not because they really preferred something vulgar. The Porter program was planned for the afternoon of December 24th, because that was a time that would not interfere with any of the neighboring parties, and would enable the community to make its own judgment as to which it considered the more appropriate celebration by seeing the two types in close succession.

About the middle of December Mrs. Harvey began to emphasize the Christmas idea in all the class work. Dickens' Christmas carol was read in morning exercises and good music played. The hand work periods were devoted to making simple and useful gifts for parents. A few photographs of great paintings were put on the wall, and their stories told the children. The Christmas carol furnished the key for the preparations. Scrooge became extremely distasteful to the children, and the "not what we give, but what we share" idea permeated every

activity. The school learned Christmas songs and a short program devoted entirely to appropriate selections was planned. The holiday soon meant all that it ought to the school, and the gathering held on the 24th showed the whole community what a Christmas party conceived and carried out in the spirit of the season could be. Besides the short program, which had been chosen to bring about a definite step in the education of Porter, there was a small tree and a Santa Claus who distributed the gifts the children had made; as well as a general social hour. All Mrs. Harvey's aims were accomplished by this first Christmas program, and similar exercises held on the afternoon before Christmas have become a fixture in the community social calendar. All the parents of the district attend and as many others as the school will hold. It is one of the best mediums for holding social ideals and sound ethical standards before the community.

On January 10th Mrs. Harvey made her first definite move in the organization of the district for better agriculture. At her request the board closed the school for one week, while she took four of the older boys to Columbia, Missouri, for "Farmers' Week." The Porter farmers had made little use of the technical help the state

had to offer them, so the quickened interest in agriculture that the boys brought back from Columbia was a revelation to them. The district was unused to taking part in any outside activities, but as a favor to Mrs. Harvey and through her success in arousing the interest of the boys themselves, the parents were induced to go to the expense of sending their sons to "Farmers' Week." But this one wisely directed experience was enough to convince the whole neighborhood of the value of such investments. Towards the end of the month a rural expert came to visit the school, and while he was there the second community gathering took place. This meeting served a double purpose; it gave the community a chance to meet a distinguished man who had come to visit their school, and the boys a chance to tell their neighbors what they had learned during their week's stay at the state agricultural college. The program consisted of a lecture by the expert and five-minute talks by each of the four boys who had been to Columbia.

Later in February another interesting visitor talked to the patrons. A family, said to be musical, came to the school house for the first time. Some neighbors had suggested that this family be asked to play. The oldest sister played the organ and the three brothers played

the violin, mandolin and guitar. They played by ear, as they had never had any musical training. This was the first Porter concert. Mrs. Harvey noted the immense pleasure the whole community took in these crude performances; she decided that before she left Porter she would contrive a method by which any one in the district could learn enough music to satisfy his musical hunger.

The next community use of the school house was for a teachers' and patrons' institute, lasting two days. This was a temporary device fixed by law to bring school and home together. Five meetings were held in different parts of the county; country school houses were selected by the county superintendent for the purpose. Teachers and parents in that particular district were asked to participate. Lecturers were brought to talk on the topics usual at teachers' gatherings: industrial work, music, agriculture, reading, etc. The institute functioned poorly because there was little or no attempt to adapt the lectures to local needs and local interests and has since given place to other procedure. In Porter it was useful because it was one of the numerous occasions that brought the district together and into contact with outsiders. It taxed the ingenuity of the men to invent

things that would add to the comfort of the crowd; in this way the disappearing coat rack and the swinging table came into being and were permanent improvements in the school house. Towards the spring, the editor of one of Missouri's agricultural papers came to the school to visit, and spoke to the parents in the evening.

About this time the older boys began to drop out of school to help with the early ploughing, but, unlike other years, they came back for a day whenever the weather was too bad for work in the fields or when they could get away. The work received another impetus in the early spring when Miss Margaret Crecelius came to stay with Mrs. Harvey, to help her recover from an attack of pneumonia. Miss Crecelius has been in Porter ever since; it has been through her invaluable help that Mrs. Harvey has been able to conduct the Porter school to the best advantage and at the same time to do so much toward helping other teachers to put a new spirit in their one-room schools.

The state superintendent of schools and the state rural school inspector came to visit Porter in March. The following quotation from Miss Crecelius' diary gives an excellent picture of what had been accomplished inside the school

room in five months. "At this time the school was quite different from anything else in the country. The school room was restful and clean; there were tasteful pictures and paper on the walls. . . . But still more important was the spirit of the school. The little folks (5-6 years old) were writing 'coöperation,' 'telephone,' 'furnace' in a beautiful legible hand. The older boys and girls were busy trying to make up for what they now knew they had lost. At the same time they were intensely interested in the progress of the little ones. The kindness of the older boys toward the little children—helping them put on wraps and rubbers—was touching. The school had learned the lesson of 'coöperation' from their parents and teacher. The reading of the children was wonderful, considering the short time since the opening of the school. Even more wonderful was the singing of the boys, for boys in the country are, as a rule, too bashful to sing. Nor was there any of the awkwardness one expects in boys wearing overalls. There was a quiet dignity and self-respect that made one forget everything else.

"Incident: A boy, 18 years old, needed to get his team before four o'clock in the afternoon in order to start the school wagon on time. But

so intense was his interest in Julius Cæsar that he did not start for the team until four. Country children will respond quickly to the best things if given the right stimulus."

On the first of April the annual school election was held in the school house. This was next to the last gathering in the building that year, and the only one that was not a step forward in the growth of community spirit and pride. And yet even this meeting served to bind closer together the group of parents who had worked so hard all the year to give the school the right start. The faction which has opposed Mrs. Harvey and her kind of school have, with one or two exceptions, been the childless householders in the district. They came to this school election with their minds made up to elect a director who would oppose everything that Mrs. Harvey and the other two directors wanted; and they succeeded. They wished to hear nothing of the improvements, their cost or use. In spite of a full report of the donations that had been made to the school for improvements, the expenditures of the board and the improvements installed, one of the men, pointing to something which he knew had been given to the school, said: " 'Pears to me, you bought about everything that came along." This re-

mark illustrates the amount of intelligence and thought that has been opposing Mrs. Harvey so persistently. The mothers of the school children were present at this election, and have attended every year since.

The last community gathering of the school year was held in May, when a member of the Federal Department of Education described the work of the Farragut School. But the work of the school in the community did not stop with the closing of the school term. Miss Crecelius went home during the spring for a visit; when she came back she brought in a suitcase the beginnings of one of the most important changes that have come to Porter. The suitcase was full of plants and seeds for kitchen gardens; it contained the first strawberry plants that ever grew at Porter; and from it have come the small fruit and vegetable gardens that grow on most of the farms to-day. When school stopped, Mrs. Harvey started night classes for the boys who had had to drop out of school early to do farm work.

Mrs. Harvey stayed in Porter all summer, and the work for the community kept on growing through her contact with the children and neighborly visiting. The garden that came from Miss Crecelius' suitcase and the night classes

for the older boys were the only formal school undertakings that summer. The children planted the garden around the teacher's cottage since the school house was too far away for the necessary supervision. Small groups of children came to work in the garden all through the summer. In this way Mrs. Harvey kept in touch with every family; through conversation and casual suggestion and advice she was able to continue the work of rousing the district to a realization of their possible strength as a unified community.

Mrs. Harvey and Miss Crecelius were almost entirely dependent upon the kindness of neighbors for their necessities, as well as for any opportunities to leave the house. Since she could not afford a horse, it was impossible for Mrs. Harvey to get a change or attend to errands unless her neighbors came to her rescue. Milk and water, everything, except the garden products, had to be carried from the neighboring houses. This gave Mrs. Harvey many chances for talks with parents, and for keeping up that intimate knowledge of district conditions necessary to rebuild the community. In spite of the great rush of work on the farms, the people found time to stop at the cottage and to do many kindnesses for the teachers. They

mowed the yard, cleaned up the place, brought water and presents of provisions and came to ask advice about their children. Sundays, when they had leisure, they formed the habit of dropping in at the cottage. A neighbor, who had been opposed to making so much fuss over a mere school, came one day, after a severe storm, to see if any damage had been done and stayed to mend a leak in the roof. This was the beginning of his enthusiastic conversion to the support of the school. The result of this constant social contact was that when school opened in the fall Mrs. Harvey did not have to make a new start; the beginning of class-room work was not the signal for taking up a new kind of life that had been laid aside for the summer vacation; but summer work passed into fall work with no change except that the children went to the school house regularly each day instead of less regularly to the teacher's cottage.

The first year of work had accomplished relatively little in organized results, but an immense amount in creating sentiment and developing neighborliness and community pride from which were to spring the more definite plans and concrete changes. It is particularly significant that of the three years Mrs. Harvey

engaged to spend in Porter, she devoted one to getting acquainted and watching the people learn to know each other. This latter was a very important item for while most of the men had a chatting acquaintance with each other, many of the women had met only once, were, in fact, total strangers except for the hearsay knowledge they had of each other's farms, families, mutual friends, etc. If Mrs. Harvey had picked one or two definite things as the most important weaknesses in Porter and set out to change them, she probably would only have succeeded in affecting a few people in a superficial and temporary way. If, again, she had gone to Porter with plans for calling certain meetings, organizing certain clubs, and effecting some special changes in agricultural methods, for instance, she probably would have succeeded in arousing only the suspicion and antagonism of most of the district. In a community where each farm lived for itself alone, isolated from its neighbors and cut off from contact with organized forces of any kind; where the only outlet for its social instinct was a visit to town in the rôle of spectator, a program demanding immediate active participation in organized activities would have been doomed to failure. While the slower method of simply giving the families

a chance to know each other, talking to them about the possibilities of their environment and helping them with their individual problems by advice and example, loosed forces that resulted in organizations and movements. The demands for active contributions to the remodeling of the school house kept interest focussed on the school, giving the necessary feeling of responsibility and confidence in the whole undertaking.

School opened the second year on the 29th of September, and the first community gathering was held on October fourteenth, the anniversary of the opening of the new school. This gathering has become an annual institution, and either adults or children try each year to arrange an especially attractive program for the "birthday party" of the new school. The children had written the invitations to their parents and neighbors as part of their school work. The first part of the evening they entertained an audience of about sixty people with a simple program of songs and recitations. After this the adults gave reminiscent talks about the old days of the school, some of them from the children's grandparents who had themselves gone to the school. The next year the same audience attended the birthday party, and this time the

adults gave most of the program, entertaining the children with recitations they used to give when they were in school, and with an old-fashioned spelling bee. The children of the third grade took part in this program to the extent of giving out the words; one can imagine their pride in the new school when they discovered how much better Mrs. Harvey was than the spelling teachers their parents had had. By this time it had become a regular custom to have some sort of music at each gathering; if the pupils did not sing some of their school choruses, some of the young people would sing or play. At this meeting the same family who, by their playing, had made Mrs. Harvey realize the need of music gave a short concert, and some of the other young people sang. By the time the school was ready for its third birthday the community had developed to such an extent that it invited outsiders to share in the celebration. There were nearly a hundred and fifty people in the building; Mrs. Harvey gave a history of the school, but most of the entertainment was given by prominent visitors who had been taking part in the shortcourse of agriculture that came to a close that day. The last year or so, the birthday parties have become family affairs again, where the community likes to get

together to review the progress made during the year, to make plans for the future, and to laugh or wax enthusiastic over the trials and efforts of its first steps towards a community life.

The same night that the school held its first birthday party, the women of the community organized the first adult club: The Farm Women's Club of Porter Community. Without this organization much of the present community use of the school house would be impossible. Any woman may become a member by signing the constitution, and all the women of Porter belong, and with one or two exceptions all take part in its activity. Its object, as stated in the constitution, is to "unify the women of this community who are more or less separated because of the long distances between their homes, and the complex duties of farm life; to provide means of improvement and recreation for all its members; to foster a spirit of neighborly cooperation in all undertakings that will enrich the home life of its members; and to support every legitimate effort towards the upbuilding of a school which will serve efficiently the need of a growing community—a school that will be the social center, and develop a community life that will anchor our boys and girls to their

community." The activities that the club has initiated have been directed more obviously toward the development of the community than towards recreation for its members, but the women have found their greatest pleasure and refreshment in feeling that at last they are able, by working together, to build up a social life and a neighborhood spirit which will insure a wholesome and happy environment for their children. It is through the efforts of the club that the school has accumulated most of the equipment that is used for community gatherings and is at the disposal of the community. There is a large stock of drinking cups, dishes and spoons, an oil stove and an oven, cooking utensils, lamps, etc., used for school gatherings where refreshments are served. There are a canning outfit and a steam-pressure cooker, and folding chairs and decorative material that are lent to the community. The club women see to the refreshments when they are served, which is seldom, sell lunches at the demonstrations and short courses held at the school, and buy extra coal and oil for use when the school is open at night. They have furnished material for the children to make individual towels for their use at school, and occasionally help Mrs. Harvey out with other small articles that the

school needs. They have also devoted time and thought to helping each other by discussions of their mutual problems at meetings and by planning together ways to help individuals in times of sickness or trouble. Mrs. Harvey is a member of the club, and it is at its meetings that she has an opportunity to talk over in detail plans for the school and to learn the opinion of the group as to their children's needs. When plans for any new project are on foot Mrs. Harvey and the Women's Club usually get together and talk over the plans and possibilities and agree upon a campaign for launching the scheme. Her hand is greatly strengthened by the help they give her in building up public opinion; they take most of the responsibility for the smooth running of the machinery for the numerous gatherings which the community shares with other neighborhoods. At first the club met once a month, but now they have so much work on hand and so many interests that there are usually two meetings a month.

The next organization formed in Porter came as a direct result of the Farm Women's Club. Since distances are long and the women have to drive to their club meetings, they are always accompanied by their husbands. The men customarily spent the evenings visiting or playing

games while their wives conducted their business. After a few weeks the men, too, decided to organize and get more out of their evenings spent at the school house. Their organization is called the Farmers' Club, and their activities always have the community interest for a motive. They have taken over the responsibility for the coöperative care of the school plant, thus saving Mrs. Harvey the burden not only of planning every step in detail, but of securing the necessary volunteer labor for its execution. The club has coöperated with the school board to get improvements for the school which would not have been possible otherwise. They have dynamited and planted trees on the school yard, built a fence, put on a new roof; put up hitching posts and fixed a parking space; they have built a stage for use at big school gatherings; and they keep the school telephone in order. They have also made the rental of a school piano possible, by hauling the coal for the furnace free of charge, thus saving the board the money to apply to piano rent. They also take charge of the outdoor celebrations; make all the arrangements for refreshments, the stage and lighting; get the yard in order and provide hitching and parking space for visiting conveyances. Besides the activities connected with the school

and the social life of the community, the Farmers' Club devotes itself to the improvement of agriculture in the district. The kind of work they have done in this field and its results will be discussed in a later chapter.

The second year of the school Mrs. Harvey and two or three of the farmers took a pioneer step that has richly paid Porter and set an example to the whole state. For the first time in the state of Missouri, the state agricultural college sent one of its branch courses to a country district instead of holding it in a town. At first the university did not think it practical nor see the value of sending lecturers to such a sparsely settled district. But Mrs. Harvey continued to urge the college until it consented to try. Finally, in the fall of 1913, the course was held in the Porter School. The first day nineteen men attended; on the fourth day there was an audience of two hundred. The courses were held at the school house; the older boys were excused from their regular lessons to attend the lectures and what they learned there was the basis of their school work for some time afterwards. The rest of the school met at the teacher's cottage and at one of the neighboring farm houses where the lessons went on as usual. Mrs. Harvey and Miss Crecelius, with the assistance of a

young woman who had previously taught in the school, took turns in staying at the school building and in teaching those children who were not old enough to profit by the courses. The teachers were free to give the necessary time to their classes since the two community clubs were tending to the management of the course. The Women's Club cooked and served free lunches at the school building to help insure a successful week. The men's club attended to all the details of receiving and seating visitors and to the care of teams and automobiles, besides the sale of tickets. The expenses of the course were met by charging each farmer one dollar's subscription for the week's lectures. These extension lectures and demonstrations in agriculture have now become a regular institution at Porter.

In two or three years one of the neighboring school districts shared the course with Porter, each lecturer dividing his time between the two places. One autumn the attendance was small because the men had to work in the fields or lose their crops. But with this exception the courses have grown in popularity from year to year, farmers driving from many miles around to the lectures. Even when the course has been held in two places in a relatively small

area, there have been enough interested farmers for both.

It was not until the following year that the Women's Club became strong enough to make it wise to attempt the same thing for the women's work on the farm. But in January, 1915, the state college of agriculture sent a group of women instructors in home economics to Porter. For a week they lectured and gave practical demonstrations to the farm women of the neighborhood on food preservation, canning, household economy, labor-saving devices, farm cooking and the care of infants. This course was so popular with the women that they did not wait a year to hold another; they asked the teachers to come back the following summer and concentrate on canning and the use of green vegetables when the materials would be available for actual demonstration. This course was held at the school house with the same arrangements for the school classes that had been made for the short courses in agriculture. All the girls, except the youngest, were excused to attend the lectures and demonstrations. They took notes and listened attentively in order to be able to use what they had learned for their school note-books, class discussions and spelling lessons. The women in the district are most

enthusiastic about the courses; they now think about their household problems, try to make improvements wherever possible, and where they cannot solve their problems they make mental notes of questions to be asked at the next extension course.

Ever since the first year, when the musical family furnished an impromptu concert, the programs at the community gatherings had been arranged to give some expression to the musical interests of the people. Sometimes the children sang school songs, sometimes the musical family played, or two or three of the young people were selected to sing; and sometimes the whole gathering would sing old favorites, or patriotic songs. During this period Mrs. Harvey was quietly thinking up a plan to help the older boys organize a band. She talked of the idea to the mothers and received their enthusiastic support. To counteract the allurements of an evening in town by the right kind of recreation, which would give the boys a chance for the necessary sociability and fun, was the hardest problem that these parents had to meet. Mrs. Harvey knew that the boys themselves were anxious for the band, and most of the boys had already selected their instruments. But the difficulties in the way were numerous. By

April, 1915, Mrs. Harvey had thought of ways to meet all the difficulties. One of the regular club nights was devoted to the discussion of plans for the formation of a community band. The men's club met in joint session with the women's, and listened to two speakers from Kirksville who were interested in the plan and wanted to help. A few days later the Porter community band, consisting of thirteen members, was organized. Now the young women of the district are members; and the younger boys have formed a junior band. It is so popular that the young people give up Saturday nights to band practice, with scarcely a regret for the trips to town.

It was not until 1917 that the community was ready for the only other organized activity that makes up their community social life. This was the inter-denominational Sunday School, which is held at the school house every Sunday morning. There are five tiny churches in or near the district; Porter families went to all of them; while some went into town to church. The country churches are too small and poor to conduct Sunday schools or even to hold services every week; several of them are open only for a few Sundays in the summer. Many of the parents had wanted a Sunday school for their children,

and from time to time one or another of the churches had tried to organize it. None of the attempts had been really successful; people were not willing to send their children to school in one church while they went to service in another several miles away. But, as they formed the habit of using the school building for all community purposes, they realized that it was the proper place for the Sunday school. Here every family could send its children without rousing prejudices or feeling disloyal to its church; membership would be large enough for different classes to be formed suitable to the children of different ages; all the children could have the benefit of the best teachers in the district; the school house was more centrally located than any church; and the machinery for the management of the school already existed in the clubs. The extent to which the community had developed in the five years since Mrs. Harvey's coming was illustrated by the fact that the Sunday school was never suggested by her, but was the result of a spontaneous demand. The following petition, signed by forty-three persons, was sent to the school board: "Because we think it our highest duty to make opportunity for Christian training for our children whose homes are located so as to make it im-

practical to attend regularly any Sunday school already organized, we, the undersigned, do hereby respectfully petition the Board of Directors of the Porter School to allow us the use of the school house for the purpose of conducting therein a non-sectarian community Sunday school." The school was organized June 17, 1917. The necessary help in making plans and deciding on books, lessons, etc., was obtained from the Missouri Sunday School Association. There are three grades at present in the school, primary, junior and senior; the senior grade has three classes: the young women's, the young men's, and the parent's class. There have been as many as fifty-six pupils at the school and the regular attendance averages about forty-five.

The community has not needed a multiplication of clubs and organizations to hold it together. Those that have been outlined are the only formal organizations. They have been all that are necessary, since each has developed to meet a real need and since they include all the people in the community. But the meetings and entertainments planned by the clubs form a small part of the community gatherings that take place at the school house. We have seen how, the first year, visits from interesting peo-

ple were made the occasions for meeting; but less and less, as the community has developed, does it depend on outside inspiration. The school house is used so many evenings a week to meet the needs that originate at home that it is impossible to add evenings to listen to visitors, and usually, whenever some especially interesting visitor can address an audience, it is found that the school house is already open for a club meeting. Holidays and patriotic anniversaries are the occasions for most of the community gatherings that originate in the class room.

A Thanksgiving party, held the second winter of the new school, is typical of the entertainments that the children give. The children wished to commemorate the day and at the same time to honor the two clubs formed that fall, the Women's Club and the Farmers' Club. They sold tickets which they had decorated with pictures of Plymouth Rock and made ten dollars to give to the Women's Club. The entertainment consisted of a play adapted from the Courtship of Miles Standish, and another little play called the "First Thanksgiving." There was some music; then the children served the supper which had been their excuse for selling tickets. They served only old-fashioned Puri-

PORTER COMMUNITY BAND. AN INVALUABLE AID TO SOCIAL ORGANIZATION. PHOTOGRAPHED ON THE THIRD ANNIVERSARY OF ORGANIZATION

tan dishes such as baked beans, pumpkin pie, and corn bread.

The Fourth of July is the occasion for the biggest gathering of the year. An outdoor celebration is held, lasting through the day. All the neighboring districts and the people of Kirksville are invited. The program is always patriotic and usually centers around some current event. In 1915 the school held a celebration on the afternoon of Mothers' Day. The program was so attractive that the farmers of the district asked the school to make this an annual observance.

During the school year of 1915-16 there were nine special celebrations held at the school house. First the Birthday Party of the new school; then a Hallowe'en party; and at Christmas a real celebration. On Lincoln's Birthday the Shakespeare Reading Circle gave a party. The agricultural college held a poultry school in the building one evening; the community held its annual oyster supper another. Mother's Day and July Fourth were both observed. The agricultural college held an extension course in agriculture at the school, and one in home economics. The school band and chorus used the school house regularly for practice, and besides these meetings the building was used twenty

times during the year either for meetings of the two adult clubs or for special meetings and lectures called at short notice.

The regular occasions for using the school house, which occur all the year around, are, at present: Sunday morning, the Community Sunday school; Wednesday evening, Senior Band practice; Saturday afternoon and evening, Junior and Senior band practice. Semi-monthly, on Thursday evening, the Farmers' Club and the Farm Women's Club, and the Porter School Pig Club. Once a month a parents-teachers meeting is held on Sunday afternoon. Often the school is used once or twice a week for special occasions, such as lectures by agricultural experts. The week before the Fourth of July the school house was open every evening of the week either for the regular meetings and practice nights or else for rehearsals for the Fourth of July celebration. The programs are always kept simple and informal enough not to become a burden either to the teacher or to the community. Refreshments are served only at the parties and celebrations. The entertainments that the school children give are made up largely of the songs, recitations and plays from their daily class work. When special things are learned, as for the Mothers' Day program, they

are not selected until a few days ahead of time, and often are not rehearsed at all. One of the teachers usually offers to help any of the youngest children in learning their selections. But perhaps the most important lesson that the school has for other teachers who wish to develop community centers in their rural schools is that success is easy if the coöperation of the district is gained, and that an excellent way to gain it is to go slowly, give the people plenty of time to become acquainted, and then to start only that which meets an obvious and conscious need.

CHAPTER VI

THE SOCIAL LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

Just as the school is the proper center of the adult social life of a small community, so it is the place where right social habits should be developed among the children. Country children have just as many potentialities as city children; and when they are given the right stimuli they respond; the schools are the only places at present where they can get these stimuli. Mrs. Harvey teaches even the ordinary school subjects so as to build up social habits and a social consciousness among her pupils. A teacher has to choose between covering the old-fashioned lessons in an old-fashioned way and teaching her pupils how to get along together and how to fit into their environment. Mrs. Harvey has been successful because she has worked the social aim into terms of actual lessons; the only form in which it can be useful to teachers. She does not say that the purpose of education is to adjust children to their environment and then make the school into an environment en-

tirely divorced from anything in the child's past or future experience. This is what happens whenever a teacher confines her work to lessons from text-books and to drill that takes the form of repetition of processes, regardless of their content. Where text-books are the school, all attempts to teach the pupils to overcome their shyness, for instance, or to understand their community and to become responsible members of it, have to be grafted on to the routine of teaching reading and writing. The teacher finds herself trying to manage two separate schools. This is an impossible task, for the two schools are opposed to each other.

The school furnished physically and mentally with text-books imported from cities and distant regions has an anti-social influence. The children must go through so much material all disconnected from their real lives, that the only way to get the work done is to separate the school into so many individuals each working under the direction and absolute authority of the teacher, who sets the task and drills in the technique of its accomplishment and then judges the product. Pupils usually learn how to read and write and do arithmetic under this system; they memorize gems of literature and the counties in the state in a parrot-like manner. But

there is nothing there to teach them why they are learning to read and write, or the bearing it has on the life they know or even how they can use what they learn. If the school is situated in an isolated rural district where the children see nothing at home or among the neighbors to show them the uses of the skill they acquire at school, the chances are they never will make any practical application of it. This is what has happened in thousands of rural districts all over the country. The changing industrial and economic conditions have led to isolation and stagnation in the farmers' homes. The schools conducted as if their lessons had nothing to do with real life have done little to correct the situation. Consequently many communities are facing nearly intolerable social conditions entirely without the equipment to change them.

To Mrs. Harvey text-books and reading and writing are the means for getting an education, but not the education itself. Education should give an understanding of the world in which the pupil lives and a grasp of the principles on which life is organized sufficient to enable an individual to control and shape his career. Therefore she takes for her school the community in which she is teaching; not mere

text-books. These come in when needed to illustrate and explain the lessons of the community. Her lessons are always aimed at the fundamental understanding of those things the pupils see about them, and at their uses and possibilities. She teaches her pupils to be healthy; to be honest; to be able to support themselves adequately; to live pleasantly and profitably with their neighbors; and to be good citizens; these are her real lessons. Reading, writing and arithmetic are taught because they are necessary for learning one or all of the real lessons.

Every visitor to the Porter School is impressed with the easy, natural manner of the children and their freedom from self-consciousness. The impression is especially keen if the visitors have been to other one-room schools, where awkwardness is more common than the freedom of the Porter pupils. The difference is due entirely to the school; the children and their homes were just like those in most rural districts. Because they grow up in homes where there is no social life and no training in the usages of human intercourse, and where all recreation gives them the rôle of spectators at functions planned and managed by others, the children naturally come to think of themselves

as onlookers. They are at ease and interested in their surroundings only as long as they are allowed to maintain this pose. As soon as responsibility is put on them or they are called upon to take any part in the proceedings they are covered with confusion. They no longer think about what is going on but only of themselves and their own inadequacy. The result is a paralyzing self-consciousness that hampers their attempts at intercourse and expression all their lives and that marks them out as "farmers" when they do try to take part in other peoples' sociability. It is the awkward bashfulness of farm dwellers more than any peculiarity of dress that has marked them as the butt of so many jokes. It is this that makes them less ready than others in their speech and so less able to express themselves in natural, fluent English.

Since the social life of the young people in Porter was just what it was in most neighborhoods of that part of the country, Mrs. Harvey knew that the little children had no chance to develop except as they met in school. There, too often, the whole effort of the teacher is to silence expression and reduce the class to machines under the name of discipline. As they grow older the need for social outlet becomes so

insistent that it takes the only form they have seen; aimless trips to town where they wander up and down looking in store windows or going to the movies, uncomfortably conscious that they are different from the people about them, and yet excited by the life and movement.

Childish boy and girl "crushes" are another substitute for real recreation; it is etiquette for each to regard the other as his or her exclusive property, and to be jealous and exacting; late calls and lonely buggy rides are the only way of showing devotion. Everything makes for a vulgar and premature affair. The young people and the neighbors come to think of a particular boy and girl, as inevitably linked, and they drift into early marriage merely because they have formed the habit of going together. Isolated amusements are broken at rare intervals by a party or dance where all the young people who are permitted gather and indulge in a wild reaction against their usual isolation. Around Porter these parties had degenerated to such rowdyism that the young people were forbidden to go. In Porter district there were none of these parties, yet no one had thought of any way to supply more wholesome substitutes. It is hard to realize how completely vacuous the life of these country children is

until we remember that there are no books, no conversation and no playfulness at home and at school nothing but five or six-minute recitations from elementary text-books. Farm mothers are too tired when their work is done to read or tell stories to their children and as a result the children never know the child's world of Mother Goose, myths, fairy tales and adventures which we are apt to assume for every child. In Porter there were only three families where the children had ever heard of Mother Goose. One day at school a little boy looked at a picture of some cherubs and said: "I did not know that children had wings." The only association the pupils had with Good Friday was that it was the day to plant potatoes. The chores they have to do at home are about the only positive constructive element in their lives, and this remains fruitless because there is nothing in it that can appeal to the children as their own and because it is a part of the hated and endless farm grind. Someone visiting a consolidated school in an isolated region asked the principal why there was not more creative work in the school program. He replied: "That will have to come with the next generation. When we started here there was nothing; you cannot expect to get anything out of them until you

have poured something in; that's what we are doing now."

Methods were used to make a social place of the school which had worked in developing the community. "Coöperation" was preached and practised in the class room from the day the school opened. The children had heard their parents talking about the new school at home, and they had watched the remodeling of the building; so they went to school expecting something new and different, keyed up for some exciting adventure. The first thing that they discovered was that every one was interested in the building; their fathers had worked hard on it, and the teacher had plans for making it a still better place. All this was done for them; moreover, the building was given to them as something to be proud of and something for which they were responsible.

Mrs. Harvey has always talked to the pupils quite frankly about the conditions in the school and in the district. She told the whole school at the beginning of the year that she wanted them to learn how to play and how to talk to each other and to grown people. She told the older children that by using the school and the teacher they would have an unusual opportunity to develop a social life among themselves.

It would be more entertaining and more profitable than any they had known before because it would have the support of their united group, would be arranged just to give them pleasure and recreation, and would be helped by their parents and the teacher. She got them all to tell what they liked to do and what they would plan, and then pointed out to them that their desires were very different from the opportunities they had come to accept without protest, and that they were entirely within their reach.

The first winter she helped the children give a few parties in order to give them a taste of the kind of thing they seemed to want and to show them what they could do if they would develop a little conscious purpose and group responsibility for their social life. The first event was a Hallowe'en party held at the teacher's cottage, but chaperoned by one of the mothers. The children decorated the house with autumn boughs and arranged Hallowe'en games, "stunts" and appropriate refreshments. The evening was a great success, for Hallowe'en tricks and games amuse any group of wholesome young people. It served to show them how easily they could make good times for themselves, if they would learn about the things

other people do to have good times. At Christmas a program was held at the school house, where the children took part in a social gathering held for the entertainment of the whole community. It was not long after this that the older group of boys and girls in school and some of those who had left school before Mrs. Harvey came, formed the Shakespeare Reading Circle. This organization became the group through which the teacher worked in building up habits of recreation and a right social spirit for all the young people of the district.

Of course it meant a lot of work on the part of the teacher to help these young people build up a pleasant and profitable social life, especially since it meant, among the boys, breaking up habits of going to town and looking for pleasure at dances in cheap country resorts. But the children had bad habits not because they preferred that type of amusement, but because they had never seen any other; when wholesome, jolly fun and really interesting times were offered their natural good sense recognized these at once as the more entertaining. They offered an outlet for youthful energy and expression and they were not followed by a day of headache and sleepiness and the depression that always follows unnatural excitement.

Mrs. Harvey's parties of the first winter were so successful in entertaining the young people of the community that no more efforts were necessary to counteract the bad neighborhood parties of the previous years.

The next task was to get the coöperation of all the young people in building up throughout the community a sentiment for proper recreation and entertainments for all the children. With this in view Mrs. Harvey always had the members of the group help with the plans and arrangements for parties. If the boys and girls had been allowed to sit back and be amused by diversions planned and then managed by Mrs. Harvey or Miss Crecelius they would have been kept away from boot-legging dances, but nothing more would have been accomplished. When the efforts for their entertainment ceased they would have slipped right back to their old pendulum swing of long periods of dull isolation and brief flings of wild and artificial gaiety. But enlisting the aid of the group in all the plans gradually taught them how to amuse themselves and where to turn for ideas and material for parties and recreation, and more important still showed them that everyday life, school and work, furnished many opportunities for pleasure and recreation.

The pleasant occasions of the first winter served to rouse a keen appetite for social pleasure in the young people, and laid the foundation for the next step Mrs. Harvey took. Realizing that the older group in the Shakespeare Reading Circle would set standards for the younger children, she suggested to them that they make a social calendar for the year, refusing all invitations that were not a part of it. Her reasons for this were explained. Wholesome play is as necessary to people as any work they may do; a desire for fun and recreation is natural and right. But this group of young people had told their teacher of their ambitions to go to college or high school as quickly as they could. They all had rather heavy duties at home and had to spend a good while on the road to and from school, and because of the inadequacy of the old school they had more work to do to get to college than most people their age. The solution which Mrs. Harvey offered them was to refuse all invitations during the school week and devote their time to their studies. Then together they would arrange a social calendar with parties that would afford pleasure and give them the experiences that would make them as much at home with their cultured city friends as they were with each other. She ex-

plained to them that if they undertook this program it would be a point of honor with each member to live up to the condition and to take his share in promoting the club parties. She suggested that the Circle appoint a committee to arrange the calendar and that she would be glad to serve as its adviser and social arbiter. The club thought the matter over and decided to adopt the plan.

The first calendar included parties for the members of the Circle alone and gatherings and programs which took in the whole community. The events were frequent enough to satisfy the young people's eagerness for fun and yet distributed so that they would contribute to the social life of the whole community. The plan was so successful in building up social habits and teaching social usages and initiative to the members of the club, that by the second winter the fame of their entertainments had spread to town and neighboring communities. The local papers reported their doings and an invitation to a Porter gathering was an appreciated honor. Some of the events of the first social calendar were a lawn party at the teacher's cottage to meet some young people who had just moved into the district; the third birthday of the new school; an historic program involving the whole com-

THE RED CROSS IN PORTER SCHOOL: TABLEAU IN A SCHOOL ENTERTAINMENT

munity at Thanksgiving and Christmas and Washington-Lincoln celebrations at the school. New Year's Eve one of the girls gave an evening party at her house for which she sent out decorated invitations, made pretty place cards, decorated the dining-room and the refreshment table with the school colors and planned with another boy and girl of the club a very charming little ceremony to welcome in the new year. Another member of the circle gave a Hallowe'en party, requesting every one to come dressed in sheets and then entertaining them with fortunes from a witch's cauldron and a ghost dance. Another family, where there were three members of the club, gave a surprise party on the birthday of one of the members; this started with a supper for the club and ended with games, puzzles, and prizes. All of these parties would have done credit to the social life of any community because of the genuine and original nature of the entertainment they offered; and it is likely that the teacher's helping hand could be traced in several of them. But this was because Mrs. Harvey wanted to insure there being some real content in their amusements. If this group were to set a standard that all the children in the school would follow, it was important that they display imagination and

resourcefulness. Their own school and home lives had been barren of the experiences and information that develop imagination. Since they had no resources within themselves, Mrs. Harvey at first had to supply the stimulus which would arouse the conscious desire and then give them the knowledge which would enable them to satisfy the desire; and she had to do all this in a way to develop the initiative of the group.

This task, with that of building up a precedent and sentiment for the other children, might have proved impossible if it had not been for Mrs. Harvey's class-room methods. The parties became opportunities for the group to express and test out some of the things they learned in their daily lessons. At first the older group was hampered even more than the little children by their self-consciousness and shyness; and if a party had been sprung on them before any headway had been made in breaking down these habits she might have failed in spite of the lively entertainment provided. But from the day that work on the new school began everything had contributed towards establishing friendly, helpful relations within the community and between the teacher and her pupils. Many of the older group of boys had worked during the summer with their fathers on the

school building. This gave them a good start towards the desired initiative and responsibility. Several of this group had considered themselves too old to go back to school, and they went in the fall not as regular pupils, but to take advantage of her offer to help prepare for a more advanced school, or to catch up in a weak subject. Mrs. Harvey did not undertake at first to put these children through the work of the grade they had stopped, but concentrated on teaching them to read and write easily. She determined that no one should leave until she had given him the mastery of those tools which would enable him to find out for himself anything he wanted to know. She taught these older children to read just as she taught the beginners, by giving them enough to command their attention while the mechanics of their reading became automatic. She showed them how to stand before the school and read aloud a new passage in such a way that the reader and the audience understood what was said.

This sounds like a herculean task for country children fourteen and fifteen years old, with years of bad habits behind them. The method was the simple one of teaching children to read through their book work in other subjects. There were books which told something the

pupils wanted to know. This she emphasized over and over; that the only way to read is to look at the words, see what they say and then tell it to the audience. It was astonishing to see how fast the verbal uncertainties and hesitations disappeared and how the boys and girls forgot themselves in their interest in telling their story. Ease in writing she believes can come only with much practice, therefore she had this group write a great deal, but always about things in which they were interested. They filled note-books with quotations that appealed to them, with information about their special interests or about the kind of work they were doing at home. These note-books had a permanent value and this fact was used as the incentive to a good handwriting. Mrs. Harvey called their attention to the younger classes, showing how much more information the younger ones were going to get and how easily they were acquiring the tools of learning, because of the way they were taught. She made them realize the inadequacy of their own school days and explained to them how they themselves could largely make up for this if they could read and write easily. In this way she fired their ambition to make up as far as possible for the lack of opportunities in the past by making the

most of every one that presented itself. The fact that all the classes went on in one room made this easier since the older classes got the benefit of the younger ones' lessons, and the latter learned a great deal from contact with their more mature brothers and sisters.

It was through the self-confidence and enthusiasm aroused by these new and vital lessons that Mrs. Harvey made her first gains against the awkward manners and bashfulness of both old and young pupils. She also encouraged any signs of initiative, and made sure that every pupil had some responsible share in the life of the school. She spent a great deal of time simply talking with the children, and she tried in every possible way to make the example of her own friendly and pleasant manner speak forcefully to the children. Any unusual politeness or kindness on the part of a pupil she always called to the attention of the others, and she was equally careful to point out the disadvantages of a rude or thoughtless act or word. The daily routine of the school was arranged to demand social adjustment and initiative from the children. Mrs. Harvey took part in everything and with a word of encouragement or a suggestion, kept things pointed along the track of a frank and amiable sociability.

The few rules of the school were planned to make the children mingle with each other and perform their tasks regularly and cheerfully. At recess, instead of leaving the children to their own devices, Mrs. Harvey would go on the playground or into the basement with them; and if there were any idle groups standing about or if the little children could find no room to play, she would show them new games or talk to them about some plan the school had on foot, always emphasizing the possibilities for accomplishment in the things about them.

From the very beginning the one school rule has been that lunches were to be eaten in the school room instead of being carried into corners of the shed and playground. The ready consent of all the pupils to this rule was gained before it was put into effect, because Mrs. Harvey explained to them the hygienic and social advantages to be gained from it. She explained to them the effects on health of lunches improperly selected and eaten in a hurry without proper chewing or while they were running about, and emphasized the positive gains to be had from sitting down quietly, eating slowly and talking, and above all of bringing varied foods in their lunch boxes. She also pointed out to them the necessity of being part

of the group at school at meal time just as much as at home. The noon lunches furnished another opportunity for them to establish the habits of good society of which they all hoped to be members, and which must become part of their daily life; good manners cannot be put off and on like a best coat, but are part of the individual.

If the talk lagged or if there were signs of whisperings between intimates it was easy for the teacher to bring the center of attention back to the whole group by asking a question or telling a story that would start a topic of general interest. When the cold weather came the big boys were made responsible for helping the little children with their wraps and seeing that they did not go outdoors until they were well bundled up. A pupil who was especially good in any one subject was often asked to teach some of the younger children; and they, in turn, were encouraged to go to the big children with their questions and problems. The result was that the older pupils took a real interest in the progress of the beginners and felt responsible for their comfort and good conduct in school. By talking with them all about everyday happenings and the things that went on outside the school, Mrs. Harvey soon taught

them to enjoy each other's good fortune, triumphs, and successes.

Mrs. Harvey had a great deal to accomplish quickly if she was to succeed with the older group. Therefore, she concentrated with them on the lessons and experiences that would develop their self-confidence and at the same time give them the mastery of the tools they would need: reading and writing, to find out things for themselves. She had time only to set them on the right track and to arouse their ambitions by showing them what was possible, and then trust that they would want to do the rest for themselves. But with the younger children she had an opportunity not only to rouse their social sense and to direct it to fruitful channels, but to give them what she thought was the very best education possible with what she had at hand. In doing this she has followed the same methods that she used with the older group. She makes use of everything that happens in the class room and in Porter for subject matter, and everything is planned to develop the individual's ability to take his place in society. The atmosphere in the school is a continuous social lesson in itself, and Mrs. Harvey and Miss Crecelius bring out the larger significance of all the lessons. The morning ex-

ercises serve as a clearing house for the school and community. The pupils keep each other acquainted with what they are doing in their classes and with the things of common interest that are happening in the district. Mrs. Harvey keeps the school in touch with the world outside Porter by telling the children what is going on and by having them commemorate holidays and great deeds or great men. Such exercises are perhaps the most powerful single element in the school in building up a feeling of membership in and responsibility to a neighborhood and a nation. But any unusual occurrence is made use of both for giving drill in reading and writing and to increase the children's power to cope with the isolating country conditions. When the State University is using the school building for a branch short course the little children go to the teacher's cottage or to a neighbor's house for lessons and, afterwards, always write letters of appreciation to their hostess. These letters are individual, each pupil says what he wants; the work makes an excellent exercise in spelling and writing, besides teaching the children to appreciate what is done for them. They also talk over their experiences there and the words they use are written on the board and form the

basis for additional spelling and reading lessons.

The every-day experiences of the children in and out of the class room are made to furnish the material for practically all the drill that is necessary for the mastery of the tools of learning. In this way the children learn how to use in their every-day living the knowledge they get in school. Reading, writing, arithmetic and geography are learned as helps for the real lessons of the school: learning how to adjust to the community in its social, economic and national phases. A Christmas program at the school house provides matter for reading and writing lessons for a number of days, and even more valuable than this, the children are increasing their knowledge of literature, learning to conduct themselves before an audience and learning the value and beauty of doing something for others. The work of the poultry and pig clubs involves arithmetic, bookkeeping, business letter writing, and record keeping. When this work is done as regular lessons, the children learn faster and remember better than if they were going through the same processes about things that were unrelated to their interests. The opportunities to teach geography are endless when the teacher is keeping her school in-

formed about current events and showing them the relation of the industrial life of their region to the life of the country. It is this method of attack rather than that of set lessons that makes the school a social place; a place where each individual comes in contact with every other and learns to hold his own and at the same time to respect the needs of the others and of the group as a whole.

This teaching has naturally resulted in definite expressions of the social feelings of the group. We have seen how the older groups sought opportunities to give entertainments where they could meet together and enjoy each other. The reaction of the younger children was naturally less organized, but it was expressed by the readiness with which they contributed their share towards creating an atmosphere of mutual respect and sympathy in the school. When Mrs. Harvey came to Porter the children's lives were so barren that she had not only to show them how to do things, but what things it was possible for them to do. They even had to learn what there was that they could want. The first and easiest thing they learned was that they could have a good time playing together. But if these good times were to become permanent and contribute towards

establishing a lasting community they must be reinforced by interests that had a somewhat more constructive purpose. She looked for means of recreation that would bring intellectual and spiritual development with it. She found two lines of attack and has followed them both. One was the interest that the children took in agriculture. From the first the children were eager for everything that helped them to understand their parents' occupation and that put some content into the work they had to do at home. The second was the intense fondness for music shown by the whole community.

As Mrs. Harvey watched the people one night she realized that their love of music could be made a strong force in holding the community together and in developing the possibilities of community life which she saw there. Music had always found a place in Mrs. Harvey's classes because she believed it to be an excellent method of developing the finer feelings and a good critical and appreciative sense in the children. She had encouraged one of the mothers in her efforts to obtain an organ which could be loaned to the Porter School the first winter, and she had had the school sing in a body from the first day. The early singing was a big help in overcoming the shyness of the children. She

taught them good songs with simple melodies and words that would appeal to children, and then by example and suggestion she trained them to sing easily and with expression. She never makes the mistake of urging them to make a lot of noise, so their singing has none of that harsh and strained quality that is common in country schools. They sing as if they enjoyed it, and because they do enjoy it. The songs have helped a lot in building up a feeling of unity and community spirit. When the children had learned to sing together easily they learned some of the Community Center Songs, written and distributed by the Bureau of Education at Washington. She and Miss Crecelius have written for some popular air, verses about some of the most stirring events in the history of the new school, and these the children have learned with the greatest eagerness and sung them as a surprise for their parents at some community gathering.

When Mrs. Harvey saw the touching hunger of the community for music she was determined to find a way by which they could all hear good music and learn to play enough so that they could have some music in their homes. The singing was a splendid exercise for the children and very valuable in rousing group en-

thusiasm and a feeling of community solidarity, but just because it must be a social pastime for most she thought it should be supplemented by teaching which the children could use for their individual enjoyment. It was not until the spring of her third year at Porter that she was able to launch the two plans she had for the musical education of the district. Up to this time she was preparing for the work by developing the singing and encouraging both parents and pupils in their musical interests and ambitions. When she had first suggested the possibility of a community band to the older boys, they all wanted to belong to it, but saw many difficulties in the way of organizing. Mrs. Harvey waited until she felt that the difficulties could be met and the boys had developed enough confidence to be able to manage the band themselves. In the early spring of 1915 she suggested that they hold a meeting and ask the leader of the Kirksville band to help them organize. Eighteen boys joined the band, among them those who had recently left school, and adopted a constitution which called for an exclusive membership and the joint sharing of expenses. The purpose of the band as stated in the constitution was: "to promote the musical and social interests of its members and the com-

munity in general." The teacher believed in the educational value of his work and set a minimum price for lessons; he arranged with a firm for the rental of instruments with the privilege of applying the rent toward their purchase price. The boys took turns bringing him to and from town and so saved the expense of transportation. At first the boys were somewhat dismayed when they realized that they could not arrange for two lessons a week without using Saturday nights for one of them, for in spite of the good times they had at the Porter gatherings they felt that life would be dull without an occasional Saturday night in town. But they were so eager for the band and for the experience of belonging to a club which was all theirs and which they could develop as they chose that they agreed to meet Saturdays.

The band has had a harder struggle than any other organization in Porter in establishing itself. This was not because it did not have the support of the school and the community, nor yet because they did not enjoy practicing, but because this was the first opportunity this group had ever had to try out their ability as organizers and because the practical difficulties of distance, weather and expense were always introducing some new stumbling block. At one

time the organization was divided into two groups each struggling for control and each led by a boy who was overanxious to try his new-found powers. For a time the band membership dwindled to six, but the boys' interest in the work overcame their personal ambitions and antagonisms and drew them back one by one.

The first public appearance of the band was at the Fourth of July celebration in the summer of 1915, just three months after their first lesson. The boys did so well at this meeting that they got engagements for gatherings in neighboring districts and earned enough money to pay for their lessons all through the next winter, and to buy six instruments for the organization. Since then, when the treasury has become depleted for a time, a talented member of the band has been elected director and practice has gone on. At another time when they were afraid the membership was falling off because the novelty had worn away, some of the boys conceived the idea of asking the older girls of the community to join, and now the band has twenty-two members. The girls have proved to be the touch that was needed to firmly establish the permanency of the band and for the past two years practice and lessons have gone on regularly once or twice a week; the newcomers show them-

First Graduating Class from the New Porter Rural School, May 7, 1915

selves just as capable on the wind instruments as the boys. All the members now own their own instruments. While their playing may not have the highest technique and subtilty of expression, it is tuneful; the music selected is good, and their teacher has taught them to play as a unit. The Saturday-night-in-town habit has gradually disappeared in the district, and since the girls joined the band no one has complained of Saturday night practice.

To see the group of young people at a lesson is to be converted to Mrs. Harvey's ideas about country life. Attendance is nearly always complete and everyone works with earnestness and enthusiasm, trying to master his part and bring out the meaning of the selection. After the practice there is a short business meeting to make plans and arrange finances. The mere financing of a band of twenty-two members has been a task that has taught the group how to plan and carry through an undertaking, and has shown them again the value of coöperation. The fact that the band has had difficulties and has adjusted personal differences and weathered bankruptcy has done a great deal to increase the faith of the whole community in their ability to carry through a project. If the band, made up of inexperienced and hot-headed young people,

has succeeded in the face of many discouragements, they realize that anything that has a foundation in the needs of the district can be made to succeed.

The band has established itself musically, as well as an integral part of the community. The entire county looks to it as an asset. During the past year there has been scarcely a patriotic rally or drive for which they have not been asked to play. Their value outside the district has been still further demonstrated, by a contribution which sets them on their feet financially by insuring two lessons a week through the entire year.

The other plan to give the community opportunities to develop its musical interests was a coöperative arrangement for piano lessons which enabled all, instead of a favored few, to take them. When school closed in the spring of 1915, the piano class was organized. A teacher was engaged who had herself grown up in the country and who was spending her summer at home in a nearby district. She came to Porter twice a week throughout the summer and gave lessons to all the children who had joined her class. One day she spent at the school house and had pupils from eight in the morning until four in the afternoon, the other

she taught for half a day, giving lessons to the children who lived a long way from the school house; one of the farmers lent his piano for all the pupils in that neighborhood. The school house was open all day for practicing and there was a regular schedule of practice hours which the children followed. At the end of the summer the teacher held a recital in Kirksville for her Porter class; most of the pupils had made such good progress during the summer that they were able to play something that day. The parents and the children were very proud of the fact that they had done so well that their teacher wanted them to play at one of her town recitals, and Mrs. Harvey felt that she had established once more the fact that country children can do as well as any if they are given the right chance. This is a lesson that she never fails to point to when the community has scored some new success; because she feels that it is a lesson the children and their parents must learn, since the right chances have been lacking so long that the people themselves have come to think that they are not capable of anything but the dull, empty life they have become used to. The music lessons have not gone on since that first summer, but that is because a succession of crop failures has forced the farmers of that region

to shut down on all luxuries, and many homes in Porter are looking forward to continuing the lessons as soon as conditions justify it. But unlike so many city children, the Porter pupils have managed to keep up a certain amount of practicing; the lessons were an event and an enriching experience in their lives, and they have been determined to keep what they gained that summer. In one family the two children became so interested in their lessons that they persuaded their parents to let them spend the money they made from their poultry to rent a piano. And, although they have had no lessons except the casual help their mother gave them for three years, they still rent their piano with the same enthusiasm they showed at first, and when the poultry business gets so bad that they cannot make all the rent money, they borrow or earn in some other way so that they will not have to give up their practicing.

The other organizations among the children have had a more utilitarian purpose: that of making better and richer farmers. But they have always been organized and conducted in the same way. Mrs. Harvey has not suggested them until she felt sure that the community was ready to recognize their value and undertake the work involved in supporting them. Then she

has helped the children with the plans and arrangements, and launched the organization in such a way that its running would be as nearly automatic as possible and the children themselves would have to take the responsibility for the continuous work involved. Mrs. Harvey does her share towards keeping the clubs going by teaching in such a way as to continue developing the initiative and ambition of the pupils, and to supply the necessary background of knowledge to make their self-confidence effective.

CHAPTER VII

ETHICS AND THE SOCIAL SCHOOL

It is generally recognized that there are just as many demoralizing factors in country life as in city life. There is the rural slum to combat as well as the city slum. But in the country the problem is more social and moral than economic and industrial. Where ideals are not high and where incentives of family feeling and pride are lacking, the isolation of the country lowers standards and lets down bars. There is no one to see and no force of public opinion to prevent lax habits and animal instincts from gradually getting the upper hand. The result is bound to be excesses of one sort or another. If active vice does not spring up, shiftlessness and demoralization of personal habits will. The extreme of this is seen in sparsely settled parts of the country such as sections of the Oklahoma prairies where farm cabins are miles apart. Even at midday the floors are bestrewn with women, with or without children, sleeping soundly in utter oblivion of tasks and responsi-

bilities; everything falling to pieces and uncared for; the house in a litter, flies swarming, no gardens, no chickens, life reduced to its lowest terms. There is nothing to break the monotony of the featureless plain except the return of the men from work at evening. This is the zero point to which farm life tends when isolation kills the social spirit. There is neither interest to make action nor a public opinion to guide that action.

Isolation is apt to exert an anti-social influence even on the moral standards of farm regions where ideas of integrity, personal virtue, and moral responsibility are the highest. Exchange of ideas and opinions and all amenities of life are reduced to a minimum. Intolerance results, and grows and flourishes because the free intercouse which holds it in check is lacking. Each household thinks its ways and opinions are the only right ones and a vast importance comes to be attached to the minutiæ of belief. Tiny differences in dogma or even in personal habits are looked upon as dangerous moral symptoms. It is easy for neighbors to become over-critical and suspicious when moral codes are developed in such detail that people become bigoted. A holier-than-thou feeling grows up which serves to accentuate the

isolation that first caused it. However firm individual probity may be in such communities, the normal progress of society along the lines that dominate at present, social welfare and good citizenship, is nearly impossible. A highly respectable district boasting five varieties of one sect besides all the usual religious denominations will be shy on many of the more important moral qualities. The problem of developing a true country morality resolves itself into the problem of developing a community life.

It is recognized to-day that a moral life is a socialized life. Not so long ago, in the days of Puritan principles and personal uprightness, people were writing books on moral training as if it were a thing apart from any form of education. But our progress in psychology and growth in social unity has changed our point of view in regard to morals. Even when, through emotion and enthusiasm, the morality of our grand-parents avoided a mechanical rule of conduct, we see that it was shut in by its self-consciousness and lack of social sympathy and imagination. This is a commonplace to the pedagogue, but is still a matter of confused speculation to the layman. But even he has noted how lifelong habits of rectitude may be

shattered later in life if the will is "out of kilter"; when the whole man is not engaged in some absorbing, purposeful activity. Example, the layman knows, may be effective in establishing early habits; sentiment and culture may foster an appreciation of nice conduct; but these are merely auxiliary and may not of themselves be relied upon to make character or stand a crisis. For there must be a purpose strong enough to unify all mental life. When once it is commonly recognized that there is a basic truth in the old adage about Satan finding mischief for idle hands, and that it is the active pursuit of a purpose that develops character, misconduct will be recognized as more the result of external circumstances and less due to native viciousness.

It is for the synthesizing of activity on the basis of social interest that Mrs. Harvey's school is so remarkable. A community is well on its way to becoming socialized when its children are rebuilding, adapting, and beautifying their school house; when they are promoting a better community life by making gardens and raising chickens; when they are learning ways to make life less arduous and richer for all, such as water systems, labor-saving devices, cold frames, canning and preserving; when they

have healthy and stimulating recreation and abundant social intercourse, with music, literary clubs, and dramatic representations; when they learn to feel loyalty to school and family; when they can rejoice in each other's triumphs and success; when they are made to know that in proportion to their value to the community it will look out for their educational equipment and for their future. Further, when sacrifices are made in order to give the older children special attention to compensate for their meager past; when the university shows interest in their work and sends men to talk to them; when short courses become annual affairs and a local farmer donates land for experimentation; when parents are made to realize that laxity makes trouble for the whole community, then that community has made a long step in the development of the possibilities of its environment and in the establishing of a public-spirited citizenship. Mrs. Harvey's work is simplified a thousandfold by her point of view. It is not necessary for her to consider at length how to meet the several and separate problems of vulgarity, deceit, unfairness, for, as a social motive, each ethical problem has the approach and may be met when it comes with the same question: is it for the good of all? is it social justice? With

the repetition of this question the children and the community find a gauge to measure every value.

Mrs. Harvey uses every conceivable means to effect her ends. She also realizes the importance of the modern emphasis on instincts: that human desires arise from age-old impulse, not from conscious purpose. She tries to harness these instincts to social purpose. The instinct for creation, for example, although in its aim social, may in its action show a very individualistic tendency. Where only an occasional child is allowed to develop it he has been conceded the right of way. But where the active mental forces in every child are released subordination to a social principle becomes imperative. Mrs. Harvey effects this subordination by encouraging group construction and by the constantly applied standard of the good of the whole community.

While Mrs. Harvey recognizes that in a community whose active impulses have been so long asleep it is the economic and social processes that can be relied upon to make initiative, yet she sees that love of beauty and order, for instance, or respect for good workmanship and completed work are valuable mental assets. Much of the work is intentionally sentimental,

because of the necessity to wake up the imagination and impulses of the children. But the sentiment is never false; a topic for the morning talk, a song or a story are never chosen because they are merely sentimental, but wherever there are possibilities for emotion and honest sentiment they are brought out. The "Country Girl's Creed," which the whole school knows by heart, dwells on pride in the quietness and beauty of the country, on the making of a home and the community as part of a home, and helpfulness and joy, on freedom and air, sunshine and life-giving soil, songs of birds and insects, wind and rain, the spirit of growth, pride in children as the hope of the future, honest work and productive yield. The "Country Boy's Creed" and the "Farmer's Creed" are familiar to the school as well, and they emphasize the spiritual value of recognizing the beauty of country life and of work well done in similar terms. But these creeds have contributed to the development of the community not because the children have learned them by heart in school, but because they have been so taught that when they did learn them the sentiments they expressed roused emotion in the learners. Better farms, permanent families and the beauty of nature mean nothing as words; people

must know what a good farm is, what are the advantages of permanent homes over their old shifting and shiftless ways; and they must listen to birds and look at sunsets before the creeds can accomplish their purpose. But when a start has been made in a life of the right kind there is great value in anchoring it by giving expression to its appropriate sentiments and emotions. Mrs. Harvey has done all that, for she knows that however sound the control of material things it cannot be a permanent gain unless the imagination, æsthetic appreciation and aspirations are enlisted to support it. Therefore, she misses no chance to call attention to the inspiration that comes from a life in touch with nature and its laws. The songs they sing tell of neighborliness, of continuity with a past, of a common roof and a common weal, of the need of friends, beauty and kindness in life. The leaven that this teaching has been in the community is shown by the organization of the community Sunday school by the parents. They wanted the school because they had come to see the need and value of the conscious emphasis of the sentimental and ethical side of life. They know that these forces all make for a stable future, healthy homes, busy and happy children, and

the faith of the individual in the resources within himself.

Mrs. Harvey's favorite expression in describing any one of her pedagogical methods is: "suit the procedure to the occasion." The great value of this method is especially apparent in developing the ethical and æsthetic qualities of children. In the rehabilitation of the school house she was not only able to enlist the coöperation of the parents and make the enterprise a social project at the outset; but in bringing order out of chaos, cleanness out of filth, fitness and adaptation to use out of irrelevancy and disorganization, and good taste out of rampant ugliness, she initiated an appreciation for creation, for fitness of means to an end and for soundness of workmanship in objects which are to continue in service. The task of beautifying the old plant to present and growing needs became at once the organizing factor not only for social motives, but for creative motives and standards of taste. The canons of taste once recognized as worth working for, once raised to the level of consciousness, are never permitted to lapse. Mrs. Harvey and her assistants never accept careless, sloppy work. They set the example of being always neat in person and call attention to matters of taste and suitability in

the children's clothes and in those of visitors. But a spirit of fun and enthusiasm is injected into all of this. The children are encouraged to dress well and to dress up for social gatherings, to decorate the school and to enjoy every bit of beauty they can fashion. Public opinion on these matters is created in the school room and appealed to without unnecessarily wounding sensibilities by naming individuals. Self-respect is developed with care not to foster a subjective attitude.

In this way a great deal that is commonly approached as a point of moral, is reached by Mrs. Harvey through avenues of taste, thus enlisting emotion and will, instead of using the coercion of law. At the beginning of the school the only outdoor game that the children played was "blackman," a game that stimulated vulgarity, called out roughness and brutality, and allowed too much mauling of one another. Mrs. Harvey never said anything against this game, but the children have entirely eliminated its objectionable features. Higher standards of taste, a greater sense of personal dignity, and an appreciation of the value of courtesy, besides a knowledge of how to amuse themselves in other ways served to make over the game and furnish other entertainment without the necessity of indulg-

ing in any direct criticism which might have antagonized the children. This and similar rough and tumble games are occasionally played on cold days when vigorous exercise is needed. They are played by groups of children of the same age and size and the rule for catching by tapping three times instead of by holding is enforced. The children like these rules because they appeal to their sense of fairness and make the game more difficult and exciting.

Art work in the school should be the expression of the child's interest and feeling. There are no drawing books in Porter and if it were possible to manage it in a one-room school, she would allow the children to do this sort of work when they please and with any sort of material they choose. But it is a necessity for every one except the most expert and experienced teacher to conserve time and energy by having more or less uniform periods for different kinds of work. Physical conditions in the country school also impose certain limitations in material. Sand gets too cold, clay freezes, so Mrs. Harvey relies upon plasticine and paper and colored crayons. Some chance to express themselves through these mediums should be a daily occurrence, and all occasions should be used to call the children's attention to beauty and to have them

make comparisons. The daily lessons also give the children many opportunities for artistic expression. They make decorated booklets of their work, invent appropriate invitations for parties, make their letters and note-books look nice, and learn about the art of the countries they are studying in history and geography.

The methods Mrs. Harvey has employed in teaching sex hygiene in the school and community deserve special mention because she has been so successful in overcoming that almost morbid feeling of secrecy and shame that surrounds anything pertaining to sex in country districts. She has substituted for this the respect and reserve that allow an honest treatment of the subject; for she believes that only with knowledge is control possible, that it is ignorance of sex matters that leads to immorality or disaster. A frank acknowledgment of the importance of sex in life and a knowledge of its laws and the real penalties for breaking them will result in higher standards, an ability to see things in their true proportion, and a realization of the beauty of life-giving functions if they are respected and used rightly. Every child has a right as part of his equipment in life to knowledge of this nature, imparted in the cleanest, decentest way possible, just as he has a right to know that

water runs down hill and fire burns. Furthermore, the subject, developed with good feeling, may serve as a means of opening to him the significance and beauty of life in itself, of strengthening his loyalty to life and his courage to meet its problems.

Mrs. Harvey believes that it is essential that country children be given a spirit and knowledge that is consciously aimed at the formation of right habits of mind and body in sex matters because the farm environment calls children's attention to manifestations of sex life at a very early age. If children know no more than what they see and have acquired a strong feeling of secrecy and mystery about everything they know of the subject, they are building up a dangerous mental equipment with which to meet adult life and are much more apt to succumb to temptations, largely based on curiosity. In building up a healthy attitude there is comparatively little that can be recommended in the way of method, since the important thing is contagion of spirit and for this no receipt can be given. Right attitudes are contagious if the teacher has developed them honestly, and has not adopted something which she does not really understand and sympathize with. The point of view, however, cannot be right unless it

is founded upon the facts of nature and the ways in which they affect society. This is simply another way of saying that it is not a right attitude to ignore the subject or to teach that the way to deal with it is to push every question, every feeling, even every thought into the secret recesses of one's mind.

It is obvious, of course, that having established a busy, prosperous and ambitious community life, Mrs. Harvey has laid the best possible foundation for any sort of useful teaching. Educating a group of children so that they are able to live up to a high conception of social justice will of itself solve the negative problems of sex education for children. The children will have too much active, productive work to do which can be done above board and which uses up their excess vitality to have any time left for secret occupations; and a strong sense of self-respect and responsibility to parents and the community will eliminate misconduct of all sorts in normal individuals.

The key to Mrs. Harvey's teachings aimed directly at establishing a healthy sex attitude and adequate sex knowledge is the family. While she makes the home the basis of her education in social sympathy and responsibility, she finds implicit in the strengthened home bond that re-

spect for life and its processes which insures a clean and beautiful sex life. In building and beautifying the home the foundations for future homes are laid; and few words are necessary. An occasional hint here and there, a word of appreciation and admiration and the work is done. The rôle of the mother is especially emphasized, as the source of sympathy and wise suggestion throughout the life of the family, stimulating the dream of a happy home of their own in the minds of the older children.

Mrs. Harvey tries to prevent sex consciousness by throwing the boys and girls together naturally in their work and games, through the social evenings, band practice and club meetings. The girls' ability in these common activities increases the boys' respect for them and for all women. She discourages pairing off into couples and encourages general sociability. The girls are made to feel responsible for helping their boy friends to be clean and manly and are told that men look to women to help them to respect themselves. The boys are taught what to look for in a girl, what girls look for in them and that they owe it to their mothers and sisters to respect all girls. She points out to them that the usual reason why either boys or girls act in an undignified way is that they think it

pleases the other sex, but that if this is ever true, it only attracts individuals who are not worthy of friendship; that the majority of the other sex really think more of them for being nice; and that it is perfectly possible to have fun and be refined at the same time. The connection between crude and ungallant acts and vicious conduct is pointed out; and the girls are frankly told the connection between over-familiar manners and an unworthy sex attraction. It is sometimes easier to reach certain young people through standards of taste and social usage than through abstract canons of moral conduct. Taste carries with it the quick response of public opinion, and often the more immediate rewards that young people recognize as intrinsically valuable. Teaching social usage and self-respecting conduct as matters of taste is just as effective as teaching them as means to a pure sex life, and avoids self-consciousness and repetition that might lead to brooding or to over-interest.

Without a sympathetic attitude in the home Mrs. Harvey realizes that her attempts to establish ethical standards and sound knowledge would probably fail. Therefore, her initial point of attack is the parents. So many people have received their sex knowledge exclusively

from vulgar companions in childhood that they come to think of all sex knowledge as vulgar and think that instruction however given must be harmful. Hence Mrs. Harvey believes that parents and elders of the community must first be taught the proper attitude toward giving instruction in sex hygiene before much can be gained through teaching children. At best the two groups may be carried along together. Otherwise, before boys and girls enter school vulgar expressions may be learned and vicious habits formed which the teacher, however skilful, may be unable to break up. Her method of reaching the parents was indirect at first. A word now and then was spoken to individual parents and sometimes in community gatherings it was suggested that all was not being done for the boys and girls to enable them to develop to their fullest measure. When parents were especially pleased, interested or even worried over their children, the teacher would point out: "and what a fine man your son will be if we just give him the right chance." This led the parents to seek help as to the best way of giving this chance. Then Mrs. Harvey would suggest a boys' band, as one instrument which would serve four purposes in the development of the boy's character; it would keep the boy away

from the temptations of the town on Saturday night; it would give a chance for wholesome activity; it would afford a topic for interesting and instructive conversation and it would help to establish right ethical standards and social relationship.

The topics of the Mothers' Club chiefly center around the care of children. No meeting occurs without some discussion of the child's physical development. The hygienic value of providing wholesome and adequate amusement for boys and girls, such as books, pictures, games and toys, in furnishing ideas and occupation to keep their minds off themselves was explained. They were told how they could answer without embarrassment or evasion the children's questions about the origin of life; and each mother was given literature on the subject. After they had read some good pamphlets the questions that had come up were talked over in a club meeting. The men were reached by a lecturer sent out by the extension department of the state university, who gave a plain talk to the fathers on their duties and responsibilities to their children in sex matters. The men were so pleased with the value and good common sense of the talk, that they arranged to have it repeated when their wives could be present. In this way the

parents were taught to feel the necessity for following a positive and constructive course of education for their children.

With the older children in the community who have not had the advantages of a good school all their lives the work in sex education is similar to that with their parents. Mrs. Harvey knows each young person intimately and in so small a place no one can conceal his pastimes and habits to any extent. Therefore, if she has reason to suspect that an individual boy or girl is troubled or is drifting in some personal matter, she tries to help him by letting him talk it out with her. Since she gained the confidence of the children from the first day she came to Porter, this is not hard; the teacher is the best friend of every pupil in the school. They can talk to her because they know they will find her sympathetic, understanding their difficulties and temptations; and that she will not waste words in censuring, but will tell them the best and most courageous way to behave. The same man who talked to the fathers gave a lecture on the origin of life and social hygiene to the adolescent boys of the school. Mrs. Harvey has talked to the older girls and given them a book to read on the subject. These talks are not couched in such symbolic and poetic language that the children can-

Social Games in the Schoolroom,—A New Year's Party

not understand the full significance of what is told them. They are given in scientific form, and the meaning of a new term is explained; they include not only an outline of the facts of the genesis of life in plants, animals and man, but a brief statement of social abuses and the penalties in disease and ruined inheritance that follow vice. The general training in courage, self-respect, taste and social welfare, and the abundant and wholesome activities of their lives have prepared them to stand the truth and to recognize that shame and half truths are the weapons of weakness and uncertainty. The older children, of course, get the benefit of the lessons and suggestions given to the school as a whole, hence in a shorter space of time they cover about the same range of material that will run through the entire childhood of the younger pupils.

Mrs. Harvey believes that young children also should receive instruction in sex, since they begin to ask questions about the origin of life, birth, mating, etc., at an early age. These questions are usually asked parents and should be truthfully answered as soon as asked. But this incomplete information should be explained by more scientific and continuous lessons in the class room. Since country children do become

familiar with mating and birth from their own observations in the barnyard, it is doubly important that they learn life-histories of all sorts. And because this eye-sight information comes through domestic animals, Mrs. Harvey believes the formal lessons should be taken chiefly from plant life. The principles of life propagation are the same; the children are entering a new field and increasing their range of knowledge by that much while they are finding out the extent to which scientific principles are generally applicable. In using plants there is no danger of waking prematurely instincts and emotions which do not exist normally for children.

Mrs. Harvey's positive and constructive attack upon ethical questions of all sorts cannot be too much emphasized. She realizes that vice is largely a negative matter, which springs up with ignorance or idleness. Teach children to understand the things they see around them; teach them the value of service and social justice; the joy of health and how to be healthy; the need of recreation and how to make it for themselves, and the teaching of morals will shrink to the teaching of manners, good taste and appreciation of beauty. Lying, deceit, cruelty, viciousness of all sorts come from pov-

erty: material, spiritual or mental. Dealing with it by applying prohibitions and restraints is simply taking away something of the inadequate supply there is; increasing the poverty. But give children plenty of things they may do and show them how these activities will help them to be prosperous and comfortable; to find out things they are curious about; to develop the imaginative and emotional side of their natures, and unless there is some actual abnormality, evil will go from them. Every parent and good teacher knows how almost pathetically easy it is to appeal to a little child's sense of right and fairness; and if this appeal is made constant by being fair to the children's minds, bodies and hearts, the response will be permanent.

CHAPTER VIII

THE SCHOOL AND THE ECONOMIC INTERESTS OF PORTER

Learning how to avoid their usual social starvation is only half the lesson farmers must learn: necessary as it is to break down habits of isolation, the people cannot stay social long unless they are learning to change the material conditions under which they live. With a widened social outlook, there comes a demand for greater comfort and leisure and a money margin to enable each one to do his share in the social group. Social stagnation and bad farming go together. A community alive socially is sure to be open-minded towards improvements and scientific agriculture; the ambition for more time and money to spend on recreation is enough to arouse an economic interest. A district of prosperous, progressive farms means people with habits of self-improvement and social intercourse of some sort. Mrs. Harvey's problem was just as much concerned with the improvement of farm practices, health, household comfort, and the development of a

real economic sense in her district, as it was with creating a community spirit. Acquaintance with the community and opportunities to get acquainted with itself were first steps to any sort of changes, for only on such acquaintance could any confidence in the leader and in each other be based. It was as easy and natural to use occasions and make suggestions concerned with the work of the district as to show the possibilities for cultural development; Mrs. Harvey did both.

The group of farmers who first asked Mrs. Harvey to come to Porter were moved by anxiety to keep their children on the farm. They realized that the conventional education, dealing entirely with subject matter drawn from country experiences, is poor preparation for the farmer, and tends, on the contrary, to turn the children towards city life. They welcomed anything, therefore, that brought agriculture and country interests into the class room. It was here that Mrs. Harvey made her start in influencing farm practices at Porter. All the usual prejudices against "book farming" were exaggerated by the local situation. The only farm work that was done with any real scientific knowledge or skill was the breeding of stock. Several farmers had splendid herds of

pure-blooded cattle that they bred and managed according to the best methods; one farmer raised fine horses; and all of them raise a high grade of farm horse for their own uses. Some of the cattle were known to Jersey breeders all over the country and took prizes when they were exhibited. This, of course, requires ability and knowledge as well as thoroughly up-to-date methods on the part of the owners. But with this exception little attention was paid to new methods and no attempt was made to check up the size and quality of the crops against the time and money invested in them. The grain and corn yield was small per acre in spite of the best soil and climate conditions. All the farm animals except the cows and horses were mongrel, and received mongrel care, so that investments were large for the returns. Small crops to furnish food for the family or serve as a resource when the main crops failed were not attempted. Money which should have gone for comforts and recreation was spent for vegetables and canned goods that could have been grown and canned at home at almost no expense.

The Porter district had indeed better opportunities than most farm districts to get the benefit of organized farm propaganda. Besides the

government and state leaflets and bulletins that find their way into every neighborhood, the district was near the demonstration farm of the normal school in Kirksville. But this had only served to increase their suspicion of book farming and new-fangled methods. The men conducting the demonstration farm did not have to make their living from what they raised; they were, therefore, a type of men that the farmers did not recognize as belonging to themselves; and, most prejudicial of all, they tried experiments which sometimes failed. One failure loomed larger throughout the countryside than any number of successes because the farmers, unfamiliar with agricultural problems, saw no reason for experimenting and believed there was one best old-fashioned way to do everything. They saw on the demonstration farm only the resulting crops, and when these were good, that was only farming; but when they were bad, it showed the foolishness of professors trying to teach practical men anything about their own business. The result was that the farmers of Porter had built up an obstinate distrust of anything that came in the guise of science or government organized farming. They would not spray for pests, nor rotate or fertilize their crops sufficiently; they made no

attempt to keep barnyard animals of pure strain, and they planted any quality of seeds.

Mrs. Harvey realized that if she went too fast and suggested anything that would not be of immediate practical value, she stood in great danger of being classed as a mere professor of farming with a discount on all her ideas. But she knew a great deal about practical farming herself and intended to have the state college of agriculture furnish the other requisite knowledge. The first year she began to bring farm subjects into the daily lessons and to start discussions of farm practices among the children. She had them use events that happened at home for their written stories and for their talks to the other children. She also suggested in the fall that it would be a good experience for some of the older boys to go with her to Columbia for "Farmers' Week." She pointed out to the parents that they could not expect their children to love farm life if they did not give them a chance to see the best there was in it, and to see that it was a real profession with far-reaching connections and big problems and had the interest of the best men of the country. As a result of the first fall's campaign four of the older boys got a week of the best book farming and came back so enthusiastic and so full of what they had

learned that the whole district was forced to a new respect for scientific methods. The boys' information, as far as it went, was complete; they had not only seen the results, but they had learned the reasons for doing many of the things their parents had vaguely regarded as unnecessary frills.

Suggestions have been followed up with all the information necessary to make them easily understood and appreciated; moreover, these suggestions have always been practicable, with the resources of labor, equipment and skill that the farmers already had. Whenever an interesting agricultural or rural expert has come to visit the school she made an opportunity for the community to hear about his work. A number of the school gatherings held the first winter were really lectures on scientific farming. But the workers for better agriculture have become so alive to its relation to country life conditions that their lectures are usually given a very practical turn; farm life is at present unsatisfactory largely because farmers do not know how to make the most of their available resources. But Porter community was already roused to the need for changed living conditions. They soon saw, therefore, that to meet this demand they must keep up with the times in farm practices

and that their investment as well as their product must compete with that of farmers who had succeeded in making richer lives for themselves.

Conditions inside the farm house are as vital to good farming as the methods used in the fields. The same thought and reason that should be put on the farm must be applied to the work at home, for the health, comfort and recreation of any family are dependent upon the home management. If a woman's life is an endless drudgery of inefficient work, her household will never have an attractive or even comfortable home life. The economic importance of a convenient and comfortable farm house and of efficient and resourceful work for farm women is quite as great as its social importance. The health of the family depends on the way the farmer's wife cleans, washes, cooks, makes butter, preserves food, and arranges the house; and no family can be prosperous and happy without good health. In most farming regions the women take charge of some part of the paying work, chicken raising, dairying or truck gardening. At Porter the women tended to the milk and took care of the chickens and what small gardens there were. If they are sloppy in their housework, their outdoor work will be marked

by the same messiness and waste. Economic efficiency demands comfortable surroundings with rest and leisure enough for planning and for building up ambition. This is wanting in a house where the work is never done until the women drop exhausted into bed.

Mrs. Harvey's own life at Porter was a demonstration to the community of the value of applying scientific knowledge and methods to the household and the farm. We have seen how the rebuilding of the school house was done with the practical situation always in mind. The plumbing, heating and decorating were all done in a way that was suitable for any farm house in the district. Moreover, the result was pleasing, durable, and easy to take care of. The brooms, cleaning powder and scrub pail were of the kind that worked with the least time and effort for the women using them. The scrub pail especially has become a popular demonstration. When Mrs. Harvey came no one had anything but the ordinary galvanized pail with the open top. Now there is hardly a farm house in the district where a pail with a patent wringer top is not used for scrubbing. The women instantly appreciated the great advantage of the pail, but formerly they had been too tired to make the mental exertion necessary to break away

from the customary methods of scrubbing, however back-breaking.

The teacher's cottage was made an integral part of the community. When Mrs. Harvey moved into the house it was much the worst in the district. But now, in spite of having nothing but cistern water, a persistently leaking ceiling, no cellar, no attic, and no closets, the work of the four rooms is easy. The neighbors have always marvelled at the ability Mrs. Harvey and Miss Crecelius have shown in arranging the house, and at the ease with which Mrs. Harvey's mother gets the housework done. They call often, and whenever a new device or convenience has been installed Mrs. Harvey takes pains to show it and explain its use and value. The kitchen tables, for instance, with legs longer than customary to suit the unusual height of both Mrs. Harvey and her mother, were a revelation to the entire district. And even to-day a visitor is pretty sure to hear of those table legs and the lesson they taught the farmers' wives about the value of making their work as comfortable and as easy as possible. Working equipment for the home is usually manufactured with no thought for the health or convenience of the women who would use it. In the country the houses are generally built ac-

cording to a plan that is easy for the jack carpenter doing the work. The farm woman is so swamped by the daily necessity of wading through unlimited work that she has little time to find out about improved methods or even to read the printed matter that is distributed. But a demonstration of work tables built the right height for the worker, low telephones, and a well-arranged kitchen were concrete lessons that the tired farmers' wives appreciated and that brought a quick response in improved conditions in neighboring houses.

Besides the school house and teacher's cottage, Mrs. Harvey began another demonstration her first year at Porter: the garden at the teacher's cottage. There were gardens of sorts around nearly every house in Porter, but the tendency was here as in every farm community to sacrifice the beauty and restfulness of flowers, and the advantages of green vegetables to the more concrete returns to be had from herds and poultry yards. A demonstration was needed to show the ease and economy of a restful yard with blue grass, vines and flowers that required little attention; and the value of a plentiful supply of vegetables for the table. The garden at the cottage was started with the double purpose of giving the children the val-

uable lessons to be learned from applying the things about soils and plants that they were learning in the class room, and arousing their civic pride and æsthetic sense so that they would feel the need of pleasant, restful and healthy surroundings. The children eagerly learned the lessons in harmonious arrangement of color, size and foliage. They did all the work themselves from helping with the plans and understanding the reasons for them, preparing the soil, planting, weeding and watering to gathering the crops. The children enjoyed the work and the reaction on the neighborhood was remarkably prompt. The first summer the children started gardens of their own at home, and took a more active interest in those that already existed. Mrs. Harvey impressed on them from the beginning that in undertaking gardens of their own they must assume the full responsibility, and not add to the burdens of already overworked parents by expecting help with work which it was particularly appropriate for them to do.

Many of the gatherings held in the school house had as their purpose to improve the farm practices in the district. Porter has acquired a reputation as a progressive and accessible district. The lecturers, experts and demonstrators

of the state college of agriculture all know that the machinery for community gatherings exists and works easily, and, as a result, whenever they are in the neighborhood, they are apt to offer their services for a lecture or demonstration in the school house. In this way the people of the district keep track of the progress made throughout the state and have many opportunities to discuss their own problems with those who can help them. The value of the school house and a teacher-leader to act as a connecting link between the state and federal service and the individual family has been fully shown. Previously the farmers had not only made little or no use of the laboratories, the experts, and the information which every state maintains for the free use of its farmers, but they were suspicious of any bits of information that drifted to them from these sources. Now every family in the district knows just what kind of help the state can give, how to get it, and how good it is. Every family is helped by means of the consulting and advising done through the school or one of the clubs, while it is an obvious economy to the state to make a single contact with one organization in a district instead of having to work up a separate audience in every house. The benefits to the farmers themselves from

the simultaneous adoption of an improvement or new method on several neighboring farms at once are considerable.

There were two or three scientific farmers living in the district who had worked together; they had, moreover, tried to interest their neighbors in order to make their own efforts more effective. They had been hampered by their isolation and the indifference of the farmers in their attempts to get certain materials, the best grades of seeds, etc., and by the fact that farmers can only afford much of the farm machinery when bought coöperatively. When these men saw, therefore, that Mrs. Harvey was trying to rouse the whole community to a real interest in improved methods they joined her enthusiastically. One of the men had attended a branch short course in another part of the state; hence, when Mrs. Harvey told of her plan to persuade the university to hold one in the school house, he spent a lot of time visiting the neighbors and enlisting their support. Finally the few progressive farmers persuaded their neighbors either out of genuine interest or politeness to consent to subscribe to the course and attend the meetings. These men petitioned the state college to hold a Movable School of Agriculture in the Porter school house. These schools are

A Movable School of Agriculture on Its Third Visit to Porter. The "Bull Tractor" at Work

available in all states, under the Smith-Lever Law, which grants federal aid to the extent of doubling the state's expenditures for agricultural extension work. The school session lasts a week and it is held wherever there is a sufficient demand. The community is supposed to meet the expense involved in housing the school, etc., but everything else is furnished by the state. Mrs. Harvey had already persuaded the college to agree to send the course there if the farmers petitioned for it.

The short course is usually held at Porter in October. Two or three lecturers come from the university and give a series of lectures and demonstrations on subjects which bear directly on the conditions in the locality and the farmers' immediate problems. The first year a merchant in town loaned a big tent and this was set up on the school grounds for classes in stock judging and exhibits of machinery. The young men became so interested in the subject that they organized a class, taught by a breeder in the district, to continue the study of judging after the extension school closed. They used the farm yards of the district for laboratories, while Mrs. Harvey helped them with the text-book work. The other lectures that year were chiefly on soil conservation and corn growing. The courses

created so much interest in the neighborhood that thirteen members of the community went to Farmers' Week at Columbia that winter.

The short course held in 1914 continued the work begun the year before. There were daily demonstrations with a mechanical milker, the first that most of the community had ever seen, and there were stock judging lessons and contests. A series of lectures was given on crop rotations, and on the care and feeding of cattle; two lectures on hog raising and feeding, and two or three on legumes. The third year courses were held at the same time in Porter and a neighboring district. A field tractor demonstrated daily. The lecturers continued the discussions of the other two years, but emphasized especially the use of new crops, such as legumes and cover crops, previously unknown to Porter.

The school demonstration farm was started in the spring of 1914 as a result of the interest roused by the short course. A prosperous farmer who owns the land around the school house leased to the school seven acres rent free for five years, to be used as a community demonstration farm. The land is used for field crops of various kinds, wheat, oats, corn, alfalfa, clover, soy beans and many grasses. A Mis-

souri nursery considered the undertaking significant enough to be willing to contribute fruit trees and vines. The farm is worked under the direction of the Extension Department of the College of Agriculture. All the crops are handled in the best way, the best tested seeds used, and careful records kept. Frequent reports of methods, plans and results of the work on the farm are made to the community. The yearly visits of the college experts to the farm to check results and advise for the next year become community demonstrations. The management of the farm is in the hands of one of the older boys of the district, elected by the Farmers' Club. He receives the crops in return for his work. The responsibility for following exactly the college instructions and for keeping the records falls on him. The farm furnishes the materials for many class-room lessons. All the children are familiar with the ground plan of the land, the kinds and sizes of crops, their rotation, and the results of the experiments with different kinds of seeds.

The community gathering held in March, 1917, to hear a report on the farm illustrates the way the people are kept in touch with what is done. The previous summer the farm was planted with a view to testing seeds brought from different

climates and different states. On this occasion the farm manager made a report on these experiments. He pointed out the necessity for pure seeds and the difficulty of getting them by explaining an analysis made at the agricultural college of seeds he had bought from the best merchant in town. He gave in detail the number of noxious weeds that were found in a package of supposedly standard clover seeds and explained the method of having a seed analysis made. He then gave the names of the dealers who had furnished the best seeds for the farm. He told of the next year's plan of planting potatoes in the orchard and gave the name and address of an association of potato seed dealers who were reliable. As a result, several farmers began purchasing their seed potatoes cooperatively from this dealer; and for the first time the farmers became aware of the dangers of the indiscriminate buying of seeds.

When a state demonstrator comes to Porter, he usually begins his work by an evening talk. An orchard expert, for instance, first gave an illustrated lecture on the insects and pests that are most troublesome in the district. The next day he gave a lesson in orchard spraying and pruning in an old orchard in the neighborhood; he then gave a second lesson to the older pupils

in the orchard on the school farm. As a result of the orchard demonstrations the community bought a spraying machine and spraying material enough for all the orchards in the district; the latter to be paid for by the users, but bought coöperatively to decrease the cost. There was one farmer in the district who still did not believe that spraying paid. Because of his expressed doubts, two of his neighbors, helped by Miss Crecelius, took the machine into his orchard and sprayed all but one of his trees. The results convinced him that successful, practical farmer though he was, "book farming" could teach him something.

The Farmers' Club is doing more all the time towards getting the community to work as a whole on the problem of getting information and then applying it. It buys coöperatively for its members oil-meal, seed potatoes, navy beans and binder twine. The saving by buying in large quantities is considerable, and some of the supplies can be had in better quality when purchased by wholesale than when bought in small quantities. The club also spends many of its evenings discussing topics that are vital to all the farms in the district, giving each member the benefit of the experiences of all the others. Here are some of the

subjects they have discussed or debated: the Importance of Sowing Clover; Planting and Cultivation of Corn; Profitable Ways of Harvesting Corn; The Silo; Current Events and Markets; The Land Banking System; Resolved that it is more profitable to handle dairy cattle than beef; Resolved that every farmer having twelve or more head of cattle should have a silo.

The club, backed by the sentiment of the school house and the whole district, does good work for better country roads. The clay soil around Porter makes the roads extremely bad during thaws and heavy rains, but before the new school, the district confined its efforts to complaints about them. But now that the roads must be passable all the time or interfere with the community life and the gatherings at the school house the people have become more active road workers. The road drag is used after every heavy rain and steadily in the early spring, and the men, working together, have built a number of concrete bridges over places which used to wash out every spring. As a result, the roads are getting in better condition all the time, and many of the old mud holes, where teams used to stick fast, are disappearing. The whole district works for good roads.

The whole district used to feel that good roads were their due—someone ought to supply them; now they realize that with a little persistent effort on their part the roads can be made very useable and that the responsibility for seeing that good roads are built rests on them. If the people whose whole social and economic life depends on the use of roads do not insist on better ones, why should city dwellers and legislators build them.

The practical help and increased knowledge needed by the women to give them the ability and initiative to improve their share of the work on the farm has been gained from the Movable Schools in Home Economics held at the school house every year. These schools, like the agricultural schools, are sent by the Extension Department of the State Agricultural College under the Smith-Lever Law. The schools are managed by the Farm Women's Club; and since so much of the work takes the form of demonstrations and since it has to be adapted rather minutely to meet the needs of the immediate locality, the surrounding districts have not been invited to attend the school. But the Porter mothers and older daughters always go in full force and the audiences are as large as the teachers can handle. Mrs. Harvey prepared the

ground for these courses much as she did for the classes in better farming. Besides the demonstration in the house-keeping arrangements for the school house and for her own cottage, many little things were introduced in the daily schoolwork of the children and in the community gatherings to suggest that the women of the district were working too hard, and were not getting the best results. While the immediate reason for the organization of the Farm Women's Club was to help Mrs. Harvey keep the school house in order and make further improvements there, she always hoped it would become a working force for improved homes.

For the first year the club was too busy carrying out its immediate program of work for the school to be ready for the course in economics. But during this time they were becoming more and more conscious that many of their habits of work needed changing, and they could change them if they knew how. Finally the club decided they needed the knowledge badly enough to afford to take the time from their work at home in order to go to school for a week. They asked the university to send a movable school to Porter. The course was held in the school house in January, 1915. The older

A Movable School of Home Economics in the Porter Schoolroom. Mothers and Children Studying Together

girls of the school, as well as their mothers, went to the lectures, which were given by two women, experts in cooking and in the care of children. Both the teachers knew the farm conditions of the state, and so their demonstrations and suggestions were practical for the community. They gave cooking lessons that required only the equipment and supplies they knew could be found in every district kitchen; or, when they suggested changes, they were always for simple and inexpensive utensils that could be put to many uses. The lecturer on child care brought a small exhibit with her, consisting of a very simple layette containing all the things necessary to keep a little baby clean, attractive and healthy. She explained the best way to make and use the things, why they were arranged as they were, and how much they cost. The cooking teacher gave a demonstration with a fireless cooker, the first seen in the district. This aroused so much skeptical interest that the men were invited to come to school to dinner that day in order to learn that the machine could cook good food, in ample quantity. There was a demonstration of salad making, showing the women the possibilities for making salads with what they had in their larders at that time of the year. There were lectures on household con-

veniences and sanitation, and one on school lunches.

The district was so pleased with the course that they decided to hold another in the summer to learn how to can and preserve vegetables. The comments made by some of the women after the course showed how much the work was needed and what good use was to be made of it. One young woman said: "I was most interested in the salad demonstration. I had often read recipes of those salads, but so many utensils were called for that the ordinary farm house did not have." Another got the most help from the lectures on children's diseases and home nursing. She said: "I am especially thankful for the advice given in regard to the proper food for our little son. Since then he has suffered less." Several spoke of the fact that everything that was suggested could be done in their homes with the utensils that they already owned; and also that the course put a new interest and ambition into their daily work and lifted it above a daily grind. The mother of a very large family, with a little baby several years younger than the rest of the children, lays the superior health and the easy bringing up of this baby to the things that she has learned through the school and from the short courses.

The baby is much stronger, healthier and more good-natured than her other babies, she says; and the best part of it is that the right way to treat a baby is the easiest way. Her other children she carried in her arms and jiggled and patted and fed whenever they were hungry, and she dressed them up in long and elaborate clothes. This child follows a schedule, is not picked up if he frets a little and wears the simplest clothing. The baby is so well, so amiable and so pretty, that he has convinced every man and woman in Porter of the good sense of bringing up children according to the best rules of health and hygiene.

There are certain very concrete gauges of the material benefit the Porter community has reaped from the activities carried on by the new school which indicate that the economic conditions have improved along with the social. Since the school was started real estate values in the Porter district have increased about five dollars an acre. Real estate dealers in advertising property in the vicinity are pretty sure to mention the fact that it is in or near the Porter School district. In the early spring of 1918 the state movement for country organizations under the Federal Farm Loan Act was launched at Porter for Adair county because, as the pro-

moters said: "We can do this through the Porter farmers, for they are ready to take hold of any progressive measure." The spirit of progress and coöperation of the farmers of this community has become known throughout the state. Running water and furnaces have been installed in several homes, in spite of the fact that there has been a succession of bad years since the reorganization of the school. Vegetable gardens, small fruits, and canning and preserving have come into use with the new school. Cooperative farming has saved the farmers considerable money when it has been tried. New crops have been introduced, and much of the former soil mining has been stopped. Many of the children are making ample spending money with their chicken raising. The spirit of local pride and the feeling that they are part of an active and responsible community has done much to develop the ambition and self-confidence of all the people, and this is sure to bring further practical results in raising the standard of living and of professional achievement.

But the history of the establishment of the community as a working group with unified ideals and a fine spirit of progress and friendliness is not complete without an outline of the struggle and misunderstandings that Mrs. Har-

vey and her supporters have had to meet. We have seen that when the first arrangements were made for the reorganization of the school there was in a number of homes either active opposition to her coming or skepticism as to the length of time she would stay. The futile threats of the opponents of the new school and their half-hearted efforts to stop the work of remaking the building in the summer of 1912 were followed by the stormy election of directors in the winter when a man was elected to take the place of the retiring director and oppose anything the other two or Mrs. Harvey proposed. In August, 1913, the board elected Mrs. Harvey for her second year. A petition signed by all the parents of the children in school asked for the retention of Mrs. Harvey as teacher. The new director refused to vote or to state his reasons for not voting, but hinted at hidden reasons, which he was too considerate and virtuous to explain. For the first few years this type of subterranean defamation of the teacher's character was indulged in quite freely by a few families in the district. She recognized this as a favorite method of ignorant country people who wished to attack a teacher, and decided to stop it by meeting it in the open. At the free textbook meeting the lawyer explained to the

voters the meaning of slander and libel, and, illustrating his point with remarks that had been made in Porter, gave the penalty for such offenses. Again, at a school election, the teacher read a newspaper clipping giving an account of a suit for slander with large damages won by a rural teacher in another part of the state. This secret undermining of the school by personal abuse ceased when it was discovered that Mrs. Harvey was not afraid and that those who were indulging in it had more to lose than she.

Later in the same August a school meeting was held at the suggestion of some patrons to vote on taking advantage of the free text-book law. This law provides that money from taxes on foreign insurance companies can be applied to buying text-books for pupils in districts where application is made. At the meeting the law was read and carefully explained by a lawyer, who emphasized the fact that making the application would free each home from the burden of buying the children school books and that the money could not be obtained for any other purpose. But, in spite of the fact that the most articulate objection to the new school was that it was spending too much money, the opposing faction voted in a body against making the application. They were there in greater numbers

than the supporters of the school, who did not think the move of much importance one way or the other and were occupied with the rush of harvesting. Besides showing the extent to which the opposition to the school was unreasoning and prejudiced, the meeting served the wholesome purpose of showing the school's friends that their interest must be actively expressed, or a vote might be lost sometime when the issue was vital, through the same sort of carelessness.

The directors' meeting and the elections of the teacher or the directors have been the occasion when opponents have tried to stop the progress of the school either by electing two of the three directors or making such a row that the supporters of the school would be afraid to continue working. But the text-book meeting showed that some active campaign to uphold the school and its policies was necessary. Consequently the school patrons organized into a working group who were quite willing to adopt any honest political tricks that were necessary to keep Mrs. Harvey in Porter. It was well that they learned their lesson when they did, because the following spring another director who had helped in the reorganization of the school went out of office. This left one director in favor of

the new school and one against, and one to be elected. Both sides chose candidates they felt sure of, on the plain issue of whether Mrs. Harvey should be retained as teacher. The opponents talked and talked of the dangers of increased taxation and spread a lot of rumors, among them one that the district under the teacher's influence was planning to vote the bonds for a fifty-thousand-dollar high school. The night of the school election, every man, woman and child in Porter was packed into the school house. The atmosphere was tense with excitement as the votes for the rival candidates were counted. The director who was in favor of the new school was elected by one vote, the count standing twenty-six to twenty-seven. Even at this meeting there were two or three fathers who did not vote, but with these exceptions, every father with pupils in the school voted for the man who would support Mrs. Harvey.

Every school election since that second year has had a larger and larger majority for the new school; and, while there are still a few families who oppose and object to everything that smacks of progress, the days when school meetings meant the stirring up of the bitterest feelings in the district and were attended in fear

A Movable School of Home Economics in the Basement. "Food Values of the Apple and Proper Ways of Using It"

and anger are rapidly disappearing. In 1917 the vote for the new school was two to one and in 1918 almost three to one; both meetings were dispatched promptly, with dignity and according to parliamentary usage. In the early years of the school votes were challenged in large numbers at elections; this has entirely ceased. Twice opponents have made complaints before the county Grand Jury, charging illegal voting for school directors. On both occasions the charges were not supported by evidence and the cases were dismissed. Two families sent their children to Porter, believing that a change of teachers would stop the neighborhood feuds and would not interfere with the progress of the school. The father of one of these felt so sure that the school was merely extravagant and fancy that he reluctantly consented to sending his small son, but said that his son should never ride in the school wagon. The boy, however, believed in the school, regretted the days when he had to stay home, and filled all his home play with things he learned at school. Pointing to his father, he also repeated with gentle insistence at every gathering, "that man has got to let me ride in the school wagon." This the man soon did, and now he takes his turn with the other farmers driving the wagon. He has been com-

pletely won over by what the school has done for and has meant to his boy. The other family, seeing the rapid progress in lessons and the personal improvement as well as the intense pleasure of the children in the school, is almost converted. One of the main causes for grumbling left to the opponents of the school is that there are no graduation exercises. The children keep right on going to school, and start high school when they finish the eighth-grade work; but it is considered a sign of poor teaching that Porter does not graduate anybody, while the neighboring schools, with much less equipment, turn out four or five pupils every year. Another cause of complaint is the fact that Mrs. Harvey has the assistance of Miss Crecelius and often that of one or two other young women whom she is training as rural teachers, and that these women teach classes that Mrs. Harvey is paid to teach. In fact, everything that happens or does not happen can be made an excuse for fault-finding by a group of people who oppose out of sheer obstinacy, without knowing or wanting to know what it is they are against.

The history of the feud over the school would make an exciting story, told in detail. What has been told is enough to indicate that typical rural

conditions have been met and conquered. It is often said that the greatest hindrance to progress in country schools is the fact that the farmers themselves are opposed to good schools or, at least, so suspicious of any change, that it amounts to opposition. Many a teacher has given up an attempt at some improvement when she saw the hornet's nest of ancient feuds and fear of taxes that it stirred up. There is no doubt that if changes are to be made in spite of the prejudice and ignorance that is still very common in country districts, the teacher must prepare herself for a fearless stand. But it is even more important that she live in the district and become a real member of it and that she learn to know the people and their conditions thoroughly. If she does this and takes the time to find out what is most needed and then starts her changes and improvements from that angle, she is pretty sure to find a large enough group of staunch supporters and co-workers who appreciate the value of a real education for their children and will work for the building up of a community social life. The outline of the struggle Porter has made is sufficient to indicate that typical country difficulties, family feuds, religious differences, an over conservative spirit, and inability to look forward or

change old habits, are no more inherent in the country dweller's character, than many other symptoms of isolation, lack of opportunity and social outlet, which are the result of conditions, not their cause. Wherever there are numbers of people gathered together there is bound to exist a good deal of difference of opinion and beliefs and even instinctive antagonism between individuals. But the Porter demonstration has proven that a country community is as capable of uniting for a common purpose, and overcoming habitual differences when interesting general issues are substituted for petty personal ones as any group of people. Porter stands out throughout the state of Missouri as an example of the possibilities for growth and achievement that are latent in every country community, and which need only the guidance of a sympathetic and public-spirited teacher to be harnessed to progressive and constructive work.

CHAPTER IX

THE SCHOOL PROGRAM AND ORGANIZATION

What the Porter School has accomplished has been done with material available in any country district and with the same difficulties to overcome. If other rural teachers are to reap the benefit of Mrs. Harvey's work, this cannot be too often emphasized, for if we look at the results it is hard to believe that conditions were not more favorable for her than for most country teachers. She has met all the typical rural school problems and has worked out methods of dealing with them that not only minimize their bad points but that take advantage of every element of possible educational value to the children. The school is small and must always remain so, for the district is only three miles square; and in grain sections the number of farms does not increase much. A small district is more expensive than a large one because it is impossible, managing for a few pupils, to take advantage of certain economies of running and maintenance. Everything must be bought in

small quantities, and the up-keep of the building would be very little increased by increase in its size. The small sum that is available does not go as far as it would in a larger plant. At first Mrs. Harvey was the only teacher for eight grades, all studying in the same room; and she had to cope with the task of teaching all the lessons and managing all the different ages at once. Weather and long distances affected the Porter pupils just as much as the children of every country district. Often the little children could not get to school in winter because of the cold and snow; in the spring, when the roads were bad, the school was nearly empty. The schooling of the older pupils, especially the boys, has always been interrupted in the spring and fall by the farm work at home. Families bought their own text-books and supplies, which made it very difficult to accumulate a library or any supplementary reference material, and there was no uniformity in paper, pencils, or note-books. Traditional notions of a school's service made the parents unwilling to buy supplies with any generosity and teachers had been too inefficient or too temporary to build up a new attitude toward the school. The families of the district have always been able to buy necessary supplies, but their school had

been so poor that practically nothing was necessary.

The first step Mrs. Harvey took in meeting all these problems was to look at them with a fresh point of view, unhampered by precedent and habit. She did not look around to see what other teachers did, or what the school administrators, living in cities, advised; but she looked at Porter and the particular setting she found there. In attempting a reorganization along these lines she had the hearty coöperation of the county superintendent. Then, with a mind open to try any solutions that promised to give her pupils the best chance, she set to work with what she found to overcome her difficulties, or, if this was impossible, to increase her resources. To do this effectively, two things were necessary: to live in the district; and, by letting the children share her difficulties, to turn the difficulties into lessons. It was necessary for her to live in the district because as a boarder in a farm house she could never have the leisure and independence necessary for all the work she saw ahead, and because, in order to understand conditions thoroughly enough to use every local situation in her teaching, she must become a member of the community, with the mutual interests that a home in it would give. To Mrs. Harvey, the job

of a rural teacher is to give an education to every child in the district, not simply to conduct classes in the school house so many months a year. When the district conditions became familiar to her and she knew their significance in the lives of the people, she would see ways in which even the problems often considered hardest to meet could be solved, and their solution made to contribute to the success of her undertaking. She knew that working with the children and their parents on difficulties would help establish habits of coöperation and a unified community sentiment. Perhaps one reason she succeeded so easily in the organization of her school is that she never made the mistake of seeing it as a miniature town school, and of trying to force upon it programs and methods feasible only in a building with separated grades, several teachers and regular attendance. She recognized that many devices recommended for rural schools, like alternating grades and busy work, were simply attempts to make a one-room school work and look as if it were a graded school; and that they tended to perpetuate the very difficulties they were designed to overcome.

In Porter the problem of transportation was particularly serious, because the roads are so

very bad and because many homes are situated on the edge of the district, obliging the children to come the longest possible distance to school. The arguments for coöperative transportation are so familiar to every country teacher that it is only necessary to point out that they apply to the one-room school as well as the larger consolidated school. Every community should feel the necessity of protecting the physical and moral health of its children by seeing that they are taken safely to and from school when distances are great and weather and roads bad. A school can function efficiently only when pupils are able to attend regularly and punctually. Mrs. Harvey proposed voluntary coöperative transportation to the patrons to her school as the best solution of the problem. She agreed to find the wagon if the families along the roads where the center of the school population was would furnish the team and service. She obtained a standard type of bus, built especially for rural school use. The wagon seats about twenty children and is fitted with comfortable cushions and storm curtains. The first year the team and driver, a school boy, were furnished by a family with four children in school. The next two years the families along the route paid a boy a nominal sum to drive. He used his team

and attended school. The contract has always been for six months. When the rush of farm work is heaviest, in the spring and fall, the men and boys of the district take turns in furnishing the team and driving the wagon to and from school. In this way each family does its share towards transportation. The wagon runs on a schedule and follows the same route every day so that the children can be ready and waiting when it passes. By following an indirect route it is able to pick up all the children from more than half the district, for if it does not pass the house the children go to the nearest point that the wagon passes and are saved much of the walk.

The wagon has proved such a saving in time and comfort that the big school wagon runs from the time school opens in the fall until it closes in the summer. Mrs. Harvey and the parents all feel that it more than repays the trouble involved. All the children are spared exposure to extremes of weather and the little ones do not have to overtax themselves daily by a walk that is too long for them. The pupils on the edge of the district do not have to leave home so early in the morning, and they reach home much earlier at night. Since school does not close until four o'clock, if they had to walk

they could not reach home until after dark. The parents are spared worry about their children and the children are ill less often. From the school standpoint the gain is very large: the children arrive at school fresh and rested for their lessons. Weather is eliminated as a cause of absence, for when conditions permit any children to come to school, they permit all. Without transportation, only the sturdiest children and those living near, would go to school in the worst weather; as a result, the school runs at half or third force for two or three days, and the children present have to be held back to let those absent catch up on their return to school. The wagon, however, has made attendance at Porter as reliable as it would be in a city school. It has also proved very useful to the whole community, as it is available for any use out of school hours. Groups of neighbors often use it for community gatherings instead of taking a team for each household, and the band always uses it in the summer for its engagements in near-by districts.

Some such solution of the transportation problem is necessary before even one-room schools can run efficiently in sparsely settled regions. The complete overthrow of the school program that often results when pupils are at

the mercy of distance and weather introduces such a stumbling block into the conduct of any school that it should be eliminated at any cost. Mrs. Harvey was at a great advantage in being in a position where she could obtain a wagon immediately, but any district which is interested enough in getting its children to school easily, to be willing to coöperate in running a wagon could, by careful planning, raise the money necessary for its purchase. And any teacher who saw her work as a real all-the-year-around job, involving her in permanent responsibilities, could bring the district to the point of wanting the wagon and could find a way by which the district might own one. The ease with which this difficulty was solved as soon as a teacher with a constructive purpose came to Porter is another indication of the necessity of a teacher-leader in order to enable a community to effect its reorganization. Parents had always worried about the hardship to their children of walking to and from school, yet they had taken no steps to change the situation since they thought of the school as no immediate business of theirs and had no habits of working together.

The older boys do not enter school until after the crops are gathered and they leave in the spring as soon as the ground is soft enough for

ploughing. There are few farmers in any district rich enough or poor enough to be able to dispense with the labor the members of the family contribute to the farm. At planting and harvesting times the pressure to get a great deal of work done in a very short time makes it inevitable that every available worker should be pressed into service. Most boys thirteen years of age are capable of doing productive farm work; hence, until there is a radical change in farm methods these boys must expect to stay at home during the rush seasons. This is a permanent and stable condition which the country schools should recognize. The usual way of meeting it is to ignore it and conduct the schools so that the boys are made to feel in the wrong, as if they had no right to expect to be students so long as they persist in ploughing and harvesting. Mrs. Harvey sees that it is no more fair to do this than it would be for her to open the school house on legal holidays, go through the form of conducting lessons in an empty room and then blame the children for what they had missed when they did come back. She also thinks it is especially important to make some provision for these very boys, since they must begin work at home before the age when they can afford to stop systematic study. If the sit-

uation is accepted by assuming that the boys must work and then doing nothing to adjust the program to enable them to continue in spite of these interruptions they simply drop out of school entirely after one or two long absences. Once started in the routine of hard farm labor, the tendency is to let other interests slide and to settle to a life of monotonous work. If adult farmers need a sympathetic leader to show them how to balance their lives properly between work and developing intellectual and recreational interests, how much more necessary it is that some provision be made to keep alive the cultural interests of young boys who start work at the most sensitive and impressionable age. Therefore, feeling that it is impracticable to work to make this portion of the school attendance continuous, Mrs. Harvey sought ways for these boys to keep up their school work in spite of the fact that they cannot come back to school until late in the fall and must leave early in the spring.

Meeting this situation has been one of the hardest tasks the teacher has had at Porter; it has meant complicating the work inside the school room and adding much outside work to an already overcrowded program. The effect on the boys has justified the effort and made

the work seem light. Every boy in the older group is now a real working member of the Porter community, with ambitions and training to back him and with a splendid belief in his own powers for making farm life interesting both socially and financially. We have seen how Mrs. Harvey gained the interest of the young people who thought they had finished school by offering to help them make up any subject they had been behind in or go ahead in anything that particularly interested them. Once this group was inside the school house their development with the rest of the pupils followed as a matter of course because of the way they were taught. They came to think of the school as a place where they could come at any time even for a few days, and where they could learn a great many interesting things that made their days of hard work at home seem short because they gave food for thought and a knowledge of how to do the work better and more easily. Now as boys begin to reach the age when they stay at home to help they do not feel that they are stopping school or that their comrades will be so far ahead of them that there is no use going back. They know that whenever they can go to school they will find a teacher who understands their absences and who will help them

take up their work where they left off, regardless of the progress of the others in their class. Their school work goes on as a continuous thing in spite of their interrupted attendance.

Throughout the school Mrs. Harvey groups the children according to their proficiency in each subject: a child who is backward in arithmetic does not have to do work that is too easy for him in all other subjects, but has each lesson with a group whose skill is equal to his. With the older children this is carried to the point where each pupil is in a class alone, if necessary. The work has taught the children how to study and how to use their own initiative and ingenuity in their work, so they do not need constant supervision. Since they are always at work on something that interests them and of which they can see the value, it is not necessary to set a lesson and then have them recite it in order to make sure that they are keeping at work. During the winter months when older boys and girls are at school in full force, they work along together as a class and Mrs. Harvey meets them for long enough periods for satisfactory discussions and recitations. When the boys begin to drop out the girls go on with the work that they have started, working as individuals and going to the teacher for comment and

suggestion and for help in small matters. When a rainy day brings the whole class back to school the boys will go on with their reading or note-book work, and Mrs. Harvey will make time to have a history or literature lesson with the group as a whole. She conducts this class so that it will cover a discussion of one topic, and calls on the children who have been in school regularly to summarize the subject, so that the hour serves as a review to keep the boys in touch with the daily work and enables them to interpret their seatwork. The individual work is suited to the needs of each particular pupil. A girl of fifteen who can get to school only rarely, because the management of the entire household falls upon her, does not spend her time when there working algebra problems in a feverish haste to catch up with girls who are able to finish an entire course in algebra. Mrs. Harvey will indicate for her the most significant chapters in the books the class has been reading and tell her about the things of interest to her which the others have put in their note-books; and then she spends the day reading and copying into her own note-books the things she wants. A few minutes' talk with the teacher about her personal problems and difficulties will usually suggest to her new ways in which she

can make use of the things she is learning and meet her work with new courage and intelligence. The work for the boys is managed in the same way; there is no attempt made to have them remember enough of a text-book to weather a quiz on it. But they are given an opportunity to review the salient points of the lessons they have missed, and to get in form to be permanently available the particular things, facts, or literary selections that will be useful to them in their lives outside of school.

Recognizing that it is an impossible task for these pupils to complete in their occasional school days any subject so that they could pass a state or high school examination, Mrs. Harvey still feels that they have as much right to the formal preparation that will enable them to go on with their studies or get recognition for what they have done as the more fortunate children who do not have to work at home. Therefore, she held night and summer classes for the pupils who wanted to "finish" the conventional school subjects. The first spring she was in Porter she met the boys who had dropped out for farm work every Friday night and coached them so that they could pass examinations. She kept this up for three years, continuing the classes through the summer. This enabled the

pupils who had been handicapped by a bad school to catch up their lessons and acquire the knowledge that would allow them to go to high school if they were able, or to make some real use of their school life in their daily work if they were not. The younger pupils will not need this extra work except in rare individual cases, because they are being adequately prepared by their regular school work.

In order to make her country school serve all the youth of the district, Mrs. Harvey no longer graduates pupils from Porter. This was such an innovation and the ideas that led to it were so new to the community that she followed the custom of the conventional school to the extent of having commencement exercises the first few years. But she has never turned pupils out of the school just because they could pass a set of state examinations. For the majority of country children, school is over when they stop going to the building in their district. Yet there is nothing in eighth-grade lessons to suggest that the pupil who has mastered them is equipped to go forth and take his place as a respectable and efficient citizen, able to understand his environment and to use it for ends most worthy of himself and his country. In spite of the fact that these children must help

with the farm work, there are several months a year when they are free enough to find time for school a number of years after they normally finish eighth-grade work. Although, as a democracy, we claim to give every one the best of chances, we say to the farm child: Of course you are not educated, you should manage to go to high school, and, of course, you will have much idle time for several years to come, but you have finished eight grades and, therefore, you must leave this school. With this situation in mind, Mrs. Harvey does not wish to do anything to suggest to the children or their parents that there is any set time when education is finished and a child can afford to leave school. Therefore, she has stopped graduating pupils from Porter. When parents realized that her reason for this breach in custom was not an inability to teach advanced work, but a wish to teach them so much more, they agreed very readily. They saw in it another method by which children could be kept in school under influences that made for an understanding and appreciation of farm life as long as they could be spared from the necessity of becoming self-supporting.

Mrs. Harvey has never confined her work to having pupils recite the lessons from the approved text-books, so there is no definite mo-

ment when a group of children can be said to have finished the eighth grade, but the pupils, nevertheless, cover the state requirement and can pass the recognized examinations. Mrs. Harvey knows at what point in the conventional curriculum each pupil is, and when the time comes when an individual must leave school he receives a certificate giving credit for all the work accomplished. Usually this is a good deal more than eighth-grade work. For she not only gives the older pupils work that will help them meet their personal problems, but she gives them high-school courses when they are ready for them. In 1915, out of a class of eight graduates, five had done high-school work, four of these finishing a year of high-school work in two subjects; besides this, the English work of all the older children is far in advance of what is done in the ordinary graded school. Whenever possible, Mrs. Harvey has had pupils take the work as correspondence courses so that they could have the benefit of obtaining official credit for it. Lately, the state board of education has recognized that the school gives two years of high-school work. Pupils who want to leave home and go to a high or normal school, are helped to do so, but those who cannot do so, continue at Porter as long as they can. The

high-school work done by correspondence showed the district the value of allowing the children to go on with their advanced studies at home, and it taught them how to make use of another public agency to supply their needs. A one-room teacher can find time to help a few pupils in doing the necessary work for a correspondence course when it might be utterly impossible to make time to plan and conduct the entire course herself. This work aroused such a strong sentiment in favor of high-school work at home that in 1917 the district actually established a high school in a small shack near the school house, meeting all the conditions necessary for recognition by the state department of education, finding two extra teachers, furnishing and caring for the building.

While it is true that Mrs. Harvey has not been the only person teaching in the school house since the spring of the first year, the situation has not been easier than the typical one of having only one teacher. Mrs. Harvey always wanted her work at Porter to serve as a practical demonstration to rural teachers of the necessity of radical changes in the one-room school and of a practical method of making them. Therefore, she has spent a great deal of time away from Porter lecturing in normal col-

leges and teachers' institutes, wherever there was an audience for her gospel of efficient, responsible teacher-leaders who can give country children the chance they deserve to become effective, prosperous citizens. This has thrown much of the teaching and community work on to Miss Crecelius. Besides this, rural teachers and superintendents visit Porter the year around to see what has been accomplished and the methods that have been used. This means time from one of the teachers; so that although two or three different teachers are actually teaching classes, the total of their time does not amount to more than the full time of one teacher. At different times two young women of the district have worked in the school in order to get training for the type of community service that the school has rendered under Mrs. Harvey. Both these girls had suffered in the old Porter school and seeing what the new had done for the whole community, they wished to work with Mrs. Harvey to learn how the changes were brought about so that there might never be any danger of slipping back to the old conditions of inefficient isolation.

The contribution that the school has made is then entirely relevant to the problems of the usual teacher in a one-room school. Mrs. Har-

vey has found that having children of all grades in one room not only does not interfere with efficient teaching, but has many advantages over a graded school that compensate for some of its inevitable drawbacks. If a teacher learns to take advantage of opportunities for time saving and for emphasizing important things that arise in the one-room situation, she will have plenty of time to help older pupils or arrange the curriculum as she chooses. We have seen how Mrs. Harvey made use of the fact that the children were all together in building up the atmosphere and spirit she wanted. To do this she had, of course, to allow the pupils freedom. The children are allowed to talk together as long as they do not interrupt others and get their work done. This does away with a great many of the demands for help that a teacher would have to meet who attempted to enforce a rigid rule against whispering. Whenever an occasion arises to make it possible or advisable, a lesson is given to the school as a whole. Morning exercises, for instance, are not so much an opportunity for the children to practice reciting and group singing as they are lessons which the whole school shares. Most of the work in current events is done at that time. While the youngest children may not understand

Co-operative Moving of the Tenant House to Provide High School Advantages Nearer Home, 1917

everything that is said, they understand enough to listen attentively; indeed, part of the talk is arranged especially for them. Local events of interest are discussed at the opening exercises and, regardless of age, the pupil who has most to contribute is asked to speak. The history lessons that grow out of patriotic programs are within the grasp of everyone and the discussions of agricultural problems and methods teach something to the little children as well as the big ones. In fact, the young children take great pride in understanding as much as they can of the more advanced work that goes on, and teachers and children are often surprised at the feat of some beginner who learns an advanced spelling list from the board or memorizes a longer quotation than usual from hearing an older pupil give it at roll call.

The daily program is never chopped into minute recitation periods; each class has sufficient time to talk over its lesson, understand it and get at the significance of what it is learning. Mrs. Harvey has two ways of making time for this beside that of giving lessons to the whole school whenever possible. The first is to have only four or five classes in the school instead of the traditional eight. These are called the A class, the B class, etc., thereby doing away with

one factor that would strongly suggest going through a routine which finishes with the eighth grade. Each one of these classes corresponds roughly to two grades. The most advanced pupils form one class and take their history, science and agriculture together, even though they represent three or four different stages in arithmetic or composition. If there are only one or two new pupils entering in the fall, they are put in with the children who entered the year before, the teacher giving them different work and extra help the first few months. But after that they work with the more advanced portion of the class, except that they are not expected to accomplish so much and are not held to such high standards for the quality of handwriting, etc. Most of the classes, therefore, have two sections, the two parts doing different work where mere drill for the acquisition of skill is the important thing and working as a unit where they are acquiring and assimilating facts. On the surface, this method bears some resemblance to alternation, but it works none of the hardships of that method on the children. For at Porter, all the pupils are progressing steadily, no group ever has to plunge unprepared into work that is a year beyond them, nor yet spend a year doing work that is

easier than what they did the year before. Instead of making a fetich of an unalterable curriculum, Mrs. Harvey groups together children of about the same age and skill and gives the work that she thinks they ought to learn in order to understand the things around them. Even if a few have acquired more or less skill than the rest in the mechanics of school work, they work satisfactorily as a unit because they are at the same stage of growth and intellectual development. They think in the same way, understand the same things, and share the same experiences. Drill is a continuous process throughout their school career and it makes little difference if some pupils have had a few months more or less than others. Forcing children into situations that are beyond them or keeping them at the repetition of things they have gone beyond cannot fail to deaden intellectual interest and kill initiative.

Mrs. Harvey's second method results in time saving, but she also uses it because it seems to her to be the only way to give her pupils a real education. She does not have reading, writing, geography and history as separate subjects. She gives work that has content, that serves an educational end she has in mind, and in doing this work the pupil gets his practice in reading,

writing and arithmetic. History, gardening, poultry, English, all require a great deal of reading, writing and figuring, and when attention is paid to the form in which work is done no matter what "subject" it is done for, practice is all the more fruitful, since the pupils can understand its purpose. Spelling lessons are taken from the morning talk; writing these words to learn them constitutes a writing lesson; for grammar the same words are used in sentences. The talk is usually the basis for the history or agriculture lesson as well. Any teacher who looks at her room of children instead of the state curriculum will recognize the infinite possibilities of this method. And in using it the rural teacher is freed from the strain of rushing through countless recitations each day, which becomes a race to see how fast the pupils can recall the contents of a few pages in a text-book. She has leisure to introduce the work she feels the children need, leisure to keep older children in school after the eighth-grade work is finished, and leisure to conduct lessons of sufficient length to teach the children something.

The daily program at Porter is a flexible thing. There is a schedule which is used as an outline for the curriculum, but it is not a hard

and fast thing, and is never followed at the expense of an opportunity, however unexpected, to meet the needs of some special occasion or to turn some happening into a lesson. As Mrs. Harvey watches the progress of the pupils she plans the next step in their development and decides upon the best methods to promote it. She takes into account the proficiency of each class in the mechanics of learning, and also any particular group of facts which she wishes to make familiar to the children, and, when it is convenient to do so, follows her schedule. There are certain seasonal interruptions that occur regularly. In the winter months, for instance, the emphasis is put upon work with the older classes who cannot go to school all the year. In the spring and fall the individuals in these classes who are able to go to school work more or less independently, with casual help from the teachers, and the bulk of the day is spent with the younger classes. In the spring lessons are curtailed from time to time to allow the children to work on the school grounds. Small beds of early-blooming flowers are planted along the fences, the walks are trimmed, weeded and raked and the yard cleaned and weeded. The shrubs are cared for and a few new things planted each year. All this is done as part of

the school work; all the pupils share in the plans and learn about the new things that are started, and the youngsters have spelling and writing lessons from the words that are used in the talks about the gardening. For a few days at a time this work may cut into the indoor lessons of certain groups of pupils. Preparation for community gatherings where the school takes part in the program is made part of the school day, and is simplified and organized so that it furnishes lessons and drill of all sorts.

The daily program is set aside to give the children the benefit of any interesting events that occur. We have seen how pupils who are old enough to profit by the work attend the extension courses that the university sends to Porter; in the same way Mrs. Harvey takes time to explain any agricultural emergency that arises in the district and teaches the children the best way to meet it. Important national or international happenings are noticed and interpreted for the school. The school, as an integral part of the community, does its share of extra work and sacrifice to help in winning the war. The government demands for thrift, conservation and increased production all find their place in the curriculum as soon as they are made.

The way in which lessons and programs are

made to fit into the occasion is illustrated by the use that was made of the visit of a California gentleman to the school. After he left he wrote the children an interesting letter. Mrs. Harvey had the children copy this letter in their language note-books as an example of good English and good letter writing. Then they wrote a joint reply. The letter was written in this way because Mrs. Harvey felt that they would develop more power than by writing the letters unassisted. Their lives were so bare and so devoid of good and varied English at this time that to secure results it was necessary to give a great deal before expecting anything. The reply was also put into the note-books. Later this gentleman sent the children a box of oranges from Los Angeles. The oranges were divided and many observations were made about the wrapping and packing of the fruit. This was explained and discussed so that the information could be applied to the care of fruit in the district. The letter that accompanied the box was again put into the note-books. This time each child from the smallest to the oldest wrote his own reply; these letters are interesting examples of the progress in growth and power of the school. The ethical significance of the gift was brought out, and indirectly the children learned lessons

in gratitude and appreciation. The reading lessons of the primary group were vitalized for several days through this incident. Four or five sentences were written on the board each day about the gift. These were collected and typewritten so that the children could read the printed sentences after becoming familiar with the script. The oranges were also used for a geography lesson and as a starting point for instruction regarding the difference in crops in different localities and the exchange in produce that goes on between them.

The general program of teaching the children the things they need to know in such a way that they are constantly growing in power and technique is never lost sight of. But for a daily schedule Mrs. Harvey follows her theory, *suit the procedure to the occasion.* Since the school is made a vital part of the children's lives, the situation varies according to changing conditions, instead of duplicating itself endlessly because it follows a handful of text-books. The mastery of the tools of learning, reading, writing and arithmetic, as well as the power to study, are acquired more quickly because the drill is given in material that has meaning for the children. The school is unusually orderly and systematic and the continuous thread of the

A Practical Botany Lesson at the Teacher's Cottage

animating principle is obvious to the most casual visitor. The boys and girls who have left Porter to go to high schools have, without a single exception, made high records. These records have been possible because the children show real power to think and to meet new situations, backed by facility in managing the mechanics of their studies.

CHAPTER X

AGRICULTURE AND THE CURRICULUM

Most states are now recognizing the necessity for making some effort to promote agricultural stability through the schools. Since the exodus from farms begins with the young people, legislatures realize that influences which will affect children directly may result in checking that exodus. They also see that regions where farmers are poor and farm methods backward are the most seriously depleted by cityward migration. It is natural then to think that equipping the children to earn more money on the farm will tend to keep them there. Therefore, they say country schools ought to teach agriculture; and they pass laws making so many hours of study of the subject obligatory during the school year. They are not teachers and it is not their affair to say how it shall be taught; this important detail is left to the state educational administrators. They in turn find themselves confronted with the duty of laying out a course of study which shall fill up the required number of hours,

adopting text-books for the pupils' use and telling every teacher what lessons they shall give, regardless of varying agricultural conditions in the state. If the farmers in the legislature are skeptical of the results of this method of attack, they are still glad to have any attention paid to their profession, and they are usually so vague as to a better way of dealing with the problem that they gladly give their support to such bills. Every country teacher knows the futility of simply going through the required lessons in the agricultural text-book, in order to make better farmers or keep children on the farm. The prejudice against book farming that was so strong in Porter before Mrs. Harvey showed the people its practical applications is very general in farming regions. This fact alone discounts most of the knowledge that pupils might gain from their lessons. Besides this, the same text-book is used for a whole state, regardless of the particular conditions of soil, climate, markets, etc.; so that it is entirely a matter of chance if the information has any application to the agricultural needs of a particular district. A visitor asked the teacher in a typical one-room school if she taught any agriculture or gardening; the reply was: "No, we are not able to manage any at all." Later the

teacher returned to the subject, saying: "Of course we use the lessons in agriculture prescribed in the state curriculum." This indicates the value the teachers themselves attach to this type of agricultural teaching if it is not vitalized by the addition of practical work adapted to local conditions.

Even if it were desirable to teach grade pupils trades, farming does not lend itself to the usual state curriculum, or to any prescribed methods. It is a profession, not a mechanical trade where practice in routine acts brings skill, and one set of facts illustrates all its principles. Young children may be able to understand these general principles, but reciting long prescriptions for soil treatment under theoretical conditions for crops they have never seen, has no bearing whatever on their future as farmers, and hinders their education as it takes time which might be spent in worth-while work.

If there is nothing educational in abstract lessons in agriculture, engaging in agriculture with an open mind is an education in itself. City and country teachers alike are agreed in testifying to the value of real work in gardens to children of all ages. The work is valuable because through it the children learn so much about the commonest things about them, plants, earth,

water and sunshine, not because it teaches them processes which will enable them to earn more money when they grow up. The teaching method which looks to the environment of the child to furnish most of the class-room material and which Mrs. Harvey believes in and has developed with great skill makes the teaching of agriculture in her school a necessity. When children learn to understand the things around them and learn the possibilities and relationships of the local environment, there is no danger of training mere technicians, who are capable only of mechanical work, nor yet of developing abstract theorists, whose contact with life is confined to books and ideas.

Using the world for a text-book insures the children's being fitted to live in that world efficiently. Since the modern world even in a simple farming district is much too complicated to give one person a grasp of all its phases, the important thing in education is to give every person a good working point of view towards life. Mrs. Harvey believes that there are two essential sides to this point of view, and that it is equally important that pupils acquire them both in their school life. The first is sufficient practical knowledge of the industrial and economic life

about them from the side of its underlying principles to insure their being able as adults to control their material environment, not to be at its mercy. This work should always be taught with scientific principles and social relationships in mind; because it is no part of the duty of the public schools of a democracy to give trade training. It is their duty to teach so that everyone can approach a trade with general skill and critical faculties developed so that he can learn the trade as a whole, not simply one process of it. This involves for a school in an agricultural community, not only theory and practice in gardening and farming, but general book work which will enable the pupil to understand the business aspects of farming, its place in nattional life, markets, buying and selling; the relations of the farmer to the rest of the world.

The other side to this point of view is the understanding of the rest of the things in life, which is just as important in a democracy as the ability to earn a living. Every child should have a chance to learn how to think for himself; how to understand national and social aims, how to appreciate beauty and wholesome pleasure, how to be healthy, self-reliant and courageous, and how to find out things for himself. Real work presented in the right way promotes both

these phases of efficient social equipment. It no longer becomes necessary to argue the advantages of vocational versus cultural teaching; the teacher can devote her entire time to giving her pupils an education. No demonstration is necessary to prove the place of agriculture in the curriculum of a school which sets out to educate farm children. It belongs there just as much as an adjustment of the program to the climate, or of the seating capacity to the number of pupils.

The results of a curriculum made up and starting from the child's environment are sure to be both vocational and cultural. The difference between teaching a trade in school and using the prevailing industrial conditions for education, can be demonstrated by a description of Mrs. Harvey's methods of using agriculture in the curriculum of Porter, better than by a more theoretical discussion. We have seen how she has effectively advanced the economic prosperity of the district by helping the adults to apply scientific methods, and showing them how to get scientific knowledge, on every matter that touches their working lives. From the very first she saw that the children could be brought up to adopt the best farm methods as a matter of course, if their intelligence could be enlisted

at the outset. She selected the vegetable and flower gardens as the best point of attack for the school. Owing to conditions in the corn belt little attention has been paid to the garden on the individual farms. The farmer, busy with the planting, cultivation and harvesting of the larger crops had come to feel that he could spare no time for the garden. The work of gardening fell to the lot of the already overworked women. Usually, therefore, the plot cultivated was small and the vegetables were few and insufficient in variety and quantity. By enlisting the children in garden work several purposes were served. The garden serves as a laboratory for teaching the fundamental principles of agriculture. The children find a healthy summer occupation, and those who are too young for the heavier farm work are unconsciously acquiring knowledge and skill which is certain to make farm life attractive and satisfying to them eventually while it gives them an immediate consciousness of and pride in adding to the family comfort and in saving "mother's" strength.

School gardening can be made a valuable adjunct to country schools in the corn belt because of its educative value to the child and its effect upon the community as well. In truck growing

regions some other form of agricultural work should be employed because children are pressed into service at home so young that gardens lose their educational value. In using the environment, emphasis must always be put upon the principles involved and immediate things should be used as stepping stones to more remote things. The gardening work was in no sense supposed to react immediately upon family incomes by producing vegetables that could be sold; but was expected to react indirectly through the added understanding of agricultural principles and through a raised standard of living. Through the school garden the child at an age when he is forming tastes and habits for life can learn all the fundamentals of farming in which he is expected to take an interest later on.

Every community has its own conditions and needs, and these should determine the kind of garden work undertaken. In Porter, as in so many other country communities at that time, an exclusive bread and meat diet made up the menues, especially in the very hot and cold seasons of the year. After the early spring vegetables were gone there was a scarcity of green things, resulting in a limited diet, that affected the health of the people. By careful planning

and without too much work a family garden can be kept up that will not only supply a surplus of fruits and vegetables for canning, but will provide a variety of fresh vegetables for the table nearly all the year around. This was the practical situation that Mrs. Harvey set out to bring about by her school gardens.

The garden at Porter was planted at the teacher's cottage because a garden in the school yard would have interfered with play before school closed and would have worked an unnecessary hardship on the teacher, after it closed, as the school and cottage are three-quarters of a mile apart. In order to make the best demonstration the garden must be under the direct supervision of the teacher all the time so that the children may get the benefit of her observations. The Porter garden is fairly large and is laid out to demonstrate the best type of family garden. The rows are long enough to permit horse cultivation, the vegetables are arranged to allow for rotation of crops, the perennials are planted so as not to interfere with ploughing. Only one set of tools was available; the gardeners had to rely on those they could borrow or bring with them. The ground was broken in April of the first year by one of the seventeen-year-old boys. But all the rest of the

work was done by the teachers and the children under thirteen years of age, since none of the older children could be spared from work at home. The first planting lesson was the setting out of a small strawberry bed. The plants were a present from Miss Crecelius. Three varieties of berries were planted, two with perfect blossoms and one pistillate variety, giving an opportunity for lessons in pollination. The first year the bed was nearly ruined by drought and moles, but its care was continued and the second season there was such a good crop that the children got a splendid lesson in perseverance in the face of obstacles.

When the bed was two years old the children were taught the importance of setting out a new bed to take the place of the old, which would soon yield too small a crop. A group of girls were called in to do the transplanting of choice plants from the old bed to the new. They learned to distinguish young plants from old ones by observing the root system; how to prevent too rapid evaporation by cutting off most of the leaf growth; and that the new bed should not adjoin the old because of the transfer of insect enemies. At the close of the lesson some plants were taken home by the girls for their own gardens. The lesson was completed the

following spring when the children took home a quart or half gallon of fine large berries apiece for a sample of the new bed after visits to the school garden. Many of the berries weighed two ounces each. The old bed was retained to show difference in size and quantity of fruit. It proved a convincing demonstration to the entire community. Strawberry beds are common in Porter now.

The work was carried through the summer on the basis of the arrangement made between parents and teacher before school closed. Small groups of children were called from time to time by telephone and came to the teacher's cottage for a morning or afternoon's work in the garden. Mrs. Harvey or Miss Crecelius always worked with the children, and the lessons were given while the actual work was being done. The children were required to keep a journal of their work. They frequently took home samples of new vegetables which were always accompanied with verbal instructions on the best ways of cooking them. No artificial stimulus was needed to spur the children to the work. This method has been followed every year since, and the children are still interested workers, in spite of the fact that nearly everyone of them is responsible for the en-

tire care of a sizeable garden at home. Usually after the work in the garden is over some time is spent in discussion of the lessons learned or in work with a microscope. At first this was confined to simple demonstrations that would rouse the interest of the children and open their eyes to the wonders of nature; such as the ingenious arrangement of seeds in a pod and the perfect adaptation of a flower to its method of fertilization. As the children have acquired more knowledge the lessons have become more formal and the work is made into a practical botany course.

A small garden about a rod square very near the kitchen door served as a demonstration of a labor-saving device; the housekeeper had only a few steps to go to get the vegetables that were most often used. This bed was planted with radishes, lettuce, early peas, summer onions, beets, spinach and Swiss chard, and had a pretty border of parsley and four o'clocks. In the larger garden the things that required more space were grown. On one side of the plot were small fruits such as strawberries, raspberries, blackberries and currants. The rest of the garden was planted to facilitate the rotation of crops so that families of plants would not occupy the same ground that they had the year

before. Everything that was done was carefully worked out to furnish a demonstration of the best way to manage a garden; and was made a real lesson for the children by letting them share in the plans and explaining the reasons for doing everything in that particular way.

During the first three years of the garden the children handled many varieties of vegetables; learning the reasons for being particular about the quality of seeds, the methods of planting and caring for each thing, the variety adapted to the climate, when it matured; how it could be used on the table at the time and what use could be made of it in preparing for winter. They also learned about soil preparation, fertilization, hot-beds, transplanting, soil-depletion, pollination, cross-fertilization, reversion and the general principles of plant structure and life. A little girl six years old astonished the teachers by her interest in the onions she had planted in the school garden. With unflagging patience she set out her row; and she measured it and found it was sixty feet long. It was a real achievement in language as well when she reported in school: "I set out a sixty-foot row of onions to-day." Her perseverance was stimulated by such questions as, "Now that you have planted is your work finished?" "Who will do

the weeding and hoeing?'' She kept at her job, showing the keenest interest in the progress of her onions and walking nearly a mile in the summer heat as often as necessary to care for the row. She did every bit of the work herself and harvested a fine crop of onions in the fall.

The influence of the garden on the district is shown in the home gardens to-day. The increase in variety and quantity of vegetables in them made the work of the Movable School of Home Economics possible. The material needed for a demonstration was at hand and the women were anxious to learn how to use the unknown and untried plants on their tables. Government bulletins which had been tucked away unread before acquired interest and use. They learned new ways of cooking and serving vegetables; how to have green salad the year round, and most important of all in view of the impending war, how to can for winter use by the cold pack method.

The flower garden at the teacher's cottage has been used both to furnish lessons for the children and as demonstration for the community. The cottage yard happened to be in a most unsightly condition when Mrs. Harvey first moved there. Cleaning this up, weeding and planting flowers and vines where they would

beautify and furnish shade has been the work of the children. Changing the unsightly yard, laden with débris, into a pretty, home-like place has had an influence on many of the farm yards. The uses of vines and flowers for furnishing shade and refreshing beauty through the killing heat of the prairie summer were unknown. In many instances the routine of farm work left no leisure for the enjoyment of attractive home surroundings, therefore vines and flowers were selected that would yield a maximum of comfort and beauty with a minimum of work. Learning these things and establishing habits of caring for the appearance of the home, will do a lot towards anchoring families to a locality, making them look at their farm as a real home, which it is their duty and pleasure to care for and hand down to their children in better condition than when they received it. The following list of plants have become familiar to the children through the practical work in these school and home gardens and through study in the class room, which included pronouncing and writing names:

Bush beans, lima beans, beets, Brussel's sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower, carrots, celery, chives, cress, cucumbers, Swiss chard, sweet corn, endive, egg plant, kohlrabi, leek, lettuce,

At Work in the School Garden, Starting a Strawberry Bed, 1913

musk melon, mustard, onions, okra, parsnips, parsley, peanut, peppers, peas, potatoes, horseradish, rhubarb, radish, spinach, salsify, squash, tomatoes, turnips, watermelon.

Sweet alyssum, balsam, day lily, canna, carnation, coxcomb, chrysanthemum, dahlia, four o'clock, geranium, gladiolus, hollyhock, mignonette, nasturtium, petunia, portulaca, roses, salvia, snap dragon, sunflower, sweet William, sweet peas, verbena, violets, zinnias.

Balloon vine, bittersweet, clematis paniculata, cypress, gourds, grape, wild grape, hop, honeysuckle, moon vine, morning glory, myrtle, madeira, climbing roses or ramblers, trumpet vine, wild cucumber, Virginia creeper, wistaria.

Althea, buck-berry, lilac, mock orange, hardy hydrangea, golden elder, yellow bell, weigelia, spirea, flowering currant, diervalla Florida.

Blackberries, currants, strawberries, raspberries, red and black, grapes, apples, crab apples, cherries, peaches, pears.

The work of the Poultry Club has been one of the most popular developments of the new Porter school. This club rouses as much enthusiasm among young and old of the district as the community band. There are now thirty-seven members, from the ages of six to nine-

teen. The work was started with the younger children, but they were so successful that the older pupils were eager to join, and in many families they bought half shares in the business of a small brother or sister. The Porter chicken yards were designed to furnish only the family and as a result there were no efforts made to raise and care for chickens in a scientific way. Even for family use the investment was high for the returns. The state agricultural college was trying to stimulate the poultry industry throughout the state, since conditions were particularly favorable to it. Mrs. Harvey knew that with their coöperation the children could lay the foundations of a prosperous business for the district while they were having educational experiences that would open their eyes to the possibilities of farming as a profession. The work is easy and light, and medium-sized flocks can be carried as a profitable side line on any grain-growing farm without involving any changes in crops or labor arrangements.

In 1915 a few children started chicken raising with a borrowed hen and one setting of eggs. Each child kept a record of his work and accounts, this was done as part of the school work; and they also told the school of their

progress and their success and failures. In this way children who had not joined the club heard about its work and became interested in chicken raising. Many new children were stimulated to undertake the work the second spring. A little girl eight years old who had pure-bred chickens did the best work. This and the lessons that were given the whole school from the work of the poultry raisers created a strong sentiment for pure-bred chickens. The second spring a good-sized group of children were ready to start the scientific raising of pure birds. In February, the poultry expert of the state college came to Porter and held a poultry school for the children, in the school building. He was a splendid teacher of practical methods and his lessons furnished the final stimulus to enlist the children in the work as a serious undertaking. The members of the club kept note-books, carefully noting instructions in such form that they could follow them exactly with their settings. Lessons went on after he left, and it was not long before other children were borrowing the note-books, to copy instructions for their own use or for an older brother who wished to join the club but could not go to school. The State Poultry Experiment Station furnished each child with one setting of pure

eggs, free, as a part of their campaign to promote the poultry industry in the state.

The club members followed all instructions in the minutest detail. At first parents were inclined to be amused at the fuss the children were making, but when they saw the results the children obtained, their amusement changed to a surprised appreciation of the value of raising chickens by the book. Several children built chicken houses according to the plan approved by the college; they all made feeding hoppers, which had not been used in the district before. Each child paid all the expenses of feed and equipment, kept accounts in his notebook, and was able to tell at the end of the summer just how much profit in dollars and cents his first venture had yielded. A daily record was kept when the hens began to lay, and the eggs were charged to profit at the current market prices. Interest in the flocks was so intense that each member reported the number of eggs received every day. The children sold their cockerels in the fall, keeping the best ones to insure good settings for the next year.

In December when the Movable School of Agriculture came to Porter the children held a poultry show in the basement of the school house. Each child made an exhibition coop, fol-

lowing plans furnished by the college, and prepared their birds for exhibition as carefully as if they had been competing at the state fair. Ninety-five pure-bred chickens were exhibited. These were studied and judged, and honorable mention given to the pupils who had been most successful in handling their flocks. But no prizes were offered or asked for. This exhibit proved conclusively that the children had succeeded at poultry husbandry; and every one knew that this success included not only raising good birds, but doing it on a sound financial basis. Parents were now willing that their children should branch out on a larger scale, and coöperated by allowing them more freedom. Larger flocks were planned for the next year, and eggs were saved for settings. New members came into the club, and parents bought half shares in their children's flocks, getting rid of their own mixed chickens. Settings from the pure flocks were very precious, as every one wanted to enlarge as much as possible. The club agreed that in order to develop the industry, each member would sell settings only in the district and that they should charge a uniform price of fifty cents a setting. Every one was glad to give up chances of larger profit in the interest of establishing the industry. The work contin-

ued so successful that by the third year pure flocks were established, and the entire community recognized the new industry as a valuable asset, which they were glad to coöperate with.

After experimenting with several varieties, the community has settled down to two breeds, White Leghorns where egg production is desired, and Rhode Island Reds where owners want a general purpose flock. The work is entirely a side line to the main business of the farms, the added work being carried on by the children, and the burden of this diminishing as parents get rid of their mixed flocks and go in with the children. No one flock is large enough to be able to command an exclusive market. Each club member now sells his eggs and birds where he can in Kirksville. But from time to time orders have been received that have been filled by pooling the products of several flocks. The club is working towards the establishment of an egg circle. When each hen yard has passed beyond the experimental stage the community plans to coöperate on marketing the eggs under a guaranteed trade mark. This will enable them to undertake the regular supplying of some large market. They will be able to ship far enough to command a larger price than they can get in the local market, and even the small-

est owners will get the benefit of high prices and coöperative shipping and packing.

Name Breed	Distributed	No. R'c'd	No. Hatched	No. Broken	No. Infertile	Date Hatched
Walter Jones, R. I. Reds (S)	Apr. 6	13	5	0	8	May 1
Rita Lawson, R. I. Reds (S)	Apr. 6	16	7	0	9	May 1
Ella McDowell, R. I. Reds (S)	Apr. 16	15	13	0	2	
Hildred Webster, R. I. Reds (S)	Apr. 6	16	8	1	7	May 6
Lorena Linder, R. I. Reds (S)	Apr. 6	15	0	2	5	.....
	Skunk ate rest.			He was trapped later.		
Emory Crow, R. I. Reds (S)	Apr. 6	14	11	0	3	Apr. 29
Ruby Darr, R. I. Reds (S)	Apr. 6	14	8	2	5	Apr. 29
Mary Novinger, R. I. Reds (S)	Apr. 6	14	10	1	3	May 4
Beulah Beltzer, R. I. Reds (S)	Apr. 6	15	3	2	10	May 1
Glen Beltzer, R. I. Reds (S)	Apr. 6	14	1	5	8	May 3
Ruth Polley, R. I. Reds (S)	Apr. 6	15	13	1	1	Apr. 30
Alva Crow, R. I. Reds (S)	Apr. 6	16	5	2	9	Apr. 30
Cleo Moore, R. I. Reds (S)	Apr. 6	..	5	..	..	.....
Nellie Pinkerton, W. Leghorns	Apr. 6	16	11	0	5	Apr. 29
Lucille Webster, W. Leghorns	Apr. 6	18	11	2	5	May 7
Elizabeth Garth, W. Leghorns	Apr. 6	16	14	1	1	May 2
Julia Garth, W. Leghorns	Apr. 6	16	11	2	3	Apr. 30
John Connor, W. Leghorns	Apr. 6	16	16	0	0	May 2
Jennings Connor, W. Leghorns	Apr. 6	16	14	1	1	May 1
Emmett Polley, W. Leghorns	Apr. 6	18	11	1	6	Apr. 29
Glen Adams, Buff Rocks	Apr. 6	18	0	0	17	Apr. 30
Elnora Adams, Buff Rocks	Apr. 16	15	1	2	12	May 10
Leona Adams, Buff Rocks	Apr. 16	15	1	3	11	May 10
Edith Conner, Barred Rocks	Apr. 6	18	9	..	..	.....
Raymond Harbor, Barred Rocks	Apr. 6	18	12	..	..	.....
Mary Linder, B. Orpingtons	Apr. 6	17	9	1	7	May 1
Eunice Jones, R. I. Reds (S)	Apr. 16	17	7	0	10	May 5

The reproduction shows the report of the results from the pure settings received by the members of the club from the experiment station. Each member of the club made a similar report; this is the work of an eleven-year-old girl. The record furnished an exercise in accuracy and the simple arrangement of statistical material. It also furnished the basis for making comparison in hatches; comparisons which led to explanations as to the reasons, and the care the hen and eggs received. Besides the lessons in agriculture that are drawn from the work of the poultry club there are lessons in reading, letter-writing, spelling, penmanship, courtesy, and sound business methods. The following letter was written by a ten-year-old girl to thank an experiment station for a present of eggs they had sent the club:

"I wish to express my thanks for the Rhode Island Red eggs you sent us. We received the eggs day before yesterday. We distributed them and we thought they were fine-shaped eggs.

"I haven't set my eggs yet, but am going to do so to-night.

"The last two years I have had white Leghorns, but this year I am going to have Rhode Island Reds. The reason is because mother has

A Promising Young Member of the Poultry Club

white Leghorns and I wanted a kind different from hers, as ours would get mixed up and we couldn't tell them apart. We also want a general-purpose type on our farm.

"Last year I received a sitting of white Leghorn eggs from Mountain Grove. I hatched ten and raised nine and they were all cockerels.

"I have one hen sitting and they will hatch Sunday. I also have seven little chickens three weeks old.

"Thanking you again very much for the eggs,

"Sincerely,"

Besides the benefits the children have gained from their poultry work, the effect on the hen yards of the district is very marked. The entire community has become interested in poultry raising as a productive industry, for they now have the scientific knowledge necessary to make a success of the business. Better chicken houses are being built on the farms; one man has just built a model house costing six hundred dollars. The children are keeping records of the home experiments and are able to show their parents from the actual accounts that the flocks have already become profitable side lines. One farm where the records are particularly well kept publishes their monthly statements, thus furnishing a stimulus to fur-

ther efforts on other farms. The children still have their own flocks, however, and continue to do as well with them as their parents. Two little girls with a flock of fifteen Rhode Island Red hens are paying installments on a piano they have bought with the profits from these hens. Another girl has bought thirty war savings stamps this winter and plans to buy ten more with her profits. One boy has bred his flock so carefully that it has been judged to be the best Rhode Island Red flock in the county.

The work of the demonstration farm does not play so large a part in the lessons of the school as the garden and the poultry club, but the older class follow the experiments, and attend demonstrations of the work. As far as possible the pupils share in the work and lessons of the farm just as the whole community does; and whenever an opportunity offers, a lesson or series of lessons will be taken from the work on the farm. For example, one year the whole school shared in a study of the planning and ground arrangement of the farm. All the pupils that were able made maps to a scale of the plots and the arrangement of the crops in them. Lessons of this sort occur often, and the reports of the farm manager, himself one of the young men, are used in the note-book work with

the older group. The appended condensed report of this farmer's work through one season, illustrates the value of the farm to the community and the many-sided lessons in scientific agriculture it furnishes, especially to the older group in school, who have time and opportunity to keep the records, and check up in a business way all the work that is done. The plan for the work of which this is a report was made in consultation with one or more experts from the state college, who furnish directions for carrying out the plan, and keep track of its progress by letter, and are always available for advice in an emergency.

Report of the Farmer in Charge of the Porter School Demonstration Farm from May 12th to December 31st, 1916.

PLAT "A"

As suggested by Mr. Childers—this was to be utilized for a crop of Feterita. Owing to excessive rains at this season (early May) much of the work was delayed to permit soil being gotten into proper condition. This explains the apparent delay in beginning work.

June 5th.—Ground disked and sowed to Fe-

terita—about two thirds of plot—25 lbs. A hard rain the following day packed the ground so badly that seed did not germinate. Therefore—

June 21st.—Sowed Feterita again.

Results of Work on Plat "A"

Feterita—one and one-half tons (produced from seven pounds of seed used in re-seeding).

Plat "D"

Soy beans. May 16th-18th.—Hauling lime, spreading same and disking.

June 5th.—Sowed one and one-half gallons seed.

September 2d.—Plowed under crop, dragged, disked and harrowed.

October 9th.—Spread 800 lbs. of lime, 45 lbs. Bone Meal. Sowed three-quarters bushel of wheat.

Soy Beans were double drilled with corn planter. A heavy rain following the sowing caused poor germination and as the crop did not seem worth harvesting, it was turned under for soil improvement purposes.

Time spent by man—15 hrs.

Time spent by team—18.25 hrs. (discrepancy caused by the fact that four horses were necessary for disking).

Plat "G"

May 22d.—Trees planted. Soil was disked—weeds mowed—grapes hoed. Extreme drought prevented sowing of cover crop. No pruning done other than that by Mr. Baker. Trees have been wrapped.

Time spent by man—6.75 hrs.

Time spent by team—6 hrs.

Miscellaneous Work Done.

On fence rows and other waste lands.

Sour Dock, etc., pulled. Weeds cut down, etc.

Time spent by man—13 hours.

4,700 lbs. hay secured.

The following information is desired by the farm worker. What fertilizing treatment shall be employed—if any—on these various plats for the coming year?

What is the proper proportion of Sudan Grass seed to the acre?

Besides the continuous work on definite proj-

ects involved in the farm the poultry club and the school gardens, other agricultural lessons are introduced into the curriculum whenever it is seems desirable to do so. Any emergency which arises in the community is met by the children in the class-room lessons, just as it must be met on the farm by the actual workers. The children's work, while theoretical, has one advantage over that of their parents, it is always the best and most approved scientific method of meeting the particular problem. Often it is the information that the children carry home that enables their parents to deal with a difficulty promptly and effectively.

One of the best examples of this is the story of the Blister Beetle. The second spring of the new school this pest appeared in great numbers and began destroying plants and flowers. Mrs. Harvey remembered having seen a few of them in the school garden the summer before. She asked the farmers and was told that it was one of the commonest and worst pests. They said sometimes it was so bad that the gardens were entirely destroyed; there was nothing to do about it except take switches and thrash them off the plants. This did not sound like a very thorough method of dealing with a

pest, but Mrs. Harvey tried and found as she expected that the beetles returned to the plants almost instantly in as large numbers as ever. She found a bulletin which described the best methods of dealing with the beetle; and when the children came to school the next morning and found the sweet peas black with the bugs, she had a pan with kerosene in it and showed the children how to brush the bugs into it as the bulletin had said. The next morning there were fewer beetles on the flowers and the children tried the kerosene again. Then Mrs. Harvey read them the bulletin and had the school write papers on the information they gained from it and their own experiences in using kerosene in the school yard. They took their papers home with great pride, to give their parents advice as to the best way of really lessening the pest. Many of the children tried the simple kerosene method at home. At another time hog-cholera was raging in that part of the state; and Mrs. Harvey gave the school a whole series of lessons on the best ways of preventing it, and the best course to follow if any suspicious symptoms were noticed. The children used the information given so effectively that the disease did not get into the district at all, although it was raging near by.

When the government began sending out appeals and information to the farmer as to his responsibility for increasing the food supply during the war, Mrs. Harvey spent a lot of time in the class room making the pupils familiar with the food situation in the Allied countries, the kind of foods necessary for armies, the transportation problem, other sources of grain, the effect of war on the labor supply, and the ways in which Porter would be affected by all these things, as well as the best ways for them to do their share towards meeting them all. This information was reinforced by more concrete lessons in war crops, and how to grow them, methods of food conservation, etc. The result has been that the whole community from the very first has been able to assume its full share of extra production and conservation. They have known not merely that it was expected of them, but why it was needed and how to do it.

Dealing with pests in any other way than that recommended for the Blister Beetle was practically unknown in Porter before Mrs. Harvey's advent. After this first experience she did not wait for some particular bug to appear to make an occasion for a lesson in its extermination. From time to time as a new bulletin appears,

THE SCHOOL GARDEN TWO YEARS AFTER ORGANIZATION. SETTING OUT ANNUALS AND POTTED PLANTS NEAR THE GRAPE TRELLIS

there is a lesson on some pest; this includes not only the best practical measures for dealing with it, but the life history of the animal and the particular way in which it injures crops and which ones it attacks. These lessons are entered in the agricultural note-books, and the information is always at hand in case of need. It is chiefly through these occasional lessons that effective methods of keeping down pests have appeared in the neighborhood. Plants are treated now as a matter of course for cut worms, scale, potato bugs, currant worms, and all the commoner things that the farmer has to struggle against constantly.

Other government or university bulletins are used for text-books as they appear. The children learn about new crops, why they should be introduced and how they must be treated. They learn about new discoveries that will help the farmer, labor-saving devices, machinery, and storage methods. Legislation that affects agriculture is discussed as it is passed, and the school is kept in contact with the changing economic interests of farmers, and their relation to the state and national government. These lessons are not forced, and do not necessarily form a part of the daily program. But whenever anything occurs of general interest or im-

portance to the farmer, it is used in the class room. The work is usually introduced by a little talk and discussion at the morning exercises; and a few pupils are started on a more thorough investigation of the subject. They report the results of their work to the school, and one or two classes write papers on what they have learned or write the information in their note-books; the younger children have reading and spelling lessons with the new words employed in the discussion, and any lessons in elementary science or nature study are followed up.

Through the work in the class room, the community learns to make use of all the agencies the government maintains to help country dwellers. Porter has the reputation now for being a progressive community interested in scientific agriculture, and ready to take hold of any new movement that promises to be of use. Therefore, people are glad to give them the best service at their command. Experiment stations send all their bulletins and pamphlets to Porter. One of the most significant things about this phase of the work is the fact that unless an individual farmer makes a special request for something, the work is all done through the children. Bulletins are not sent to each farm, but

a bundle large enough for the whole community is sent to the school. It is opened there by the children under the teacher's supervision, the material is divided and taken home by the pupils, who have found out just why the things were sent out, and how they are useful.

Families with an excess supply of something will send plants to school to be distributed among neighbors not so fortunate. At the right seasons of the year the school carries on quite a brisk business as distributing center for the community. The work involved is all done by the children, and all of it is turned into a truly educational experience. They are never asked to perform a task without understanding the reasons for it; why they should do it that way, and what it should contribute to themselves or the community. Directions for planting or transplanting, pruning, spraying, etc., are never given as a series of meaningless acts which must be reproduced, but the principles involved are explained. The value of this method of approach is proven by the attitude of everyone towards farming and its problems. Where a listless feeling of discouragement used to meet every difficulty, the people tackle it now with the assurance that if they understand it they will be able to conquer it. Book farming has found

its real place. Farmers know that book knowledge cannot take the place of the skill that comes from practice, but they also know that books are the very best way for them to find out the things that they don't know. They have learned that things grow according to certain physical and chemical laws, and that recognizing them in handling crops will give an increased yield and a surer method of work.

Most of the children in the school evince a positive enthusiasm for farming. They have found all the things they have learned about plants and animals so fascinating that routine work ceases to be irksome in the light of the splendid accomplishment they know how to bring about. There is little danger that the majority of the young people in Porter to-day will not choose to remain on farms for their life work. And they will be making a real choice, not just staying through lack of ambition or equipment to try anything else. They know that the mere business of raising things calls for knowledge and skill of every sort; that it gives opportunities for doing a little of all the most interesting kinds of work: engineering, physics, chemistry, botany, nature study, sanitation, bookkeeping, economics, scientific man-

agement and many other kinds of knowledge are all called for on the modern farm.

During the past year the children of the school have undertaken two new pieces of work that promise to be of real value to all the farms of the district. Because of the initiative taken by the school nearly every family has tested all its corn before planting this spring. The story of the connection between the school and this innovation is best told in the words of a pupil of twelve who wrote the story at home to send in to the county farm bureau:

"During the month of March two or three men came from Columbia to the Porter school house to talk to the farmers urging them to test their seed corn because in nearly every corn section the corn was testing out poor.

"Some of the farmers tried the egg case method, but we thought it would not be very handy in our homes. Mrs. Harvey, our teacher at the Porter School, was fond of the Rag Doll test and so she had all the children bring five or more ears of their fathers' corn to school to show them how to test their corn by the Rag Doll method. It was not long till some of the parents were interested in what their children were doing, so most of us got to work in testing

our corn when he found out how poor some of it was testing at school.

"I think papa let us children take fifty ears to school and only thirty were good. So papa quickly made up his mind to let us four children test his corn, and we all went to work to test corn till we had enough to plant fifty acres.

"Our first test consisted of corn picked out of the crib. Out of one hundred there were only fifty-nine good ears.

"For the second test papa tested one hundred with the Jack Knife test, and we put them in the Rag Doll test, and sixty-nine were good.

"In the third test, we had four hundred ears which were gathered early last fall which tested three hundred ninety-two good.

"The fourth test we put in was corn picked out for seed while gathering and laid up in the corn crib loft, and seventy-two were good out of one hundred.

"The fifth was picked while gathering and put up in crib; out of one hundred and twenty ears, seventy-two were good.

"In the sixth and seventh test, the corn was picked while gathering and put in the crib. In the sixth out of one hundred twenty, seventy-three were good, and in the seventh test, fifty-three were good out of one hundred.

"Total number of ears tested, 1,040.

"Total number of ears good, 790.

"How glad we all were that we tested our seed corn! We have our fifty acres all planted and it is about six inches tall and is ready to plow."

May 27. 1918.

The pupils have also started a Pig Club. Its purpose is to try methods of feeding which will result in the largest gains in weight. There are seventeen members of the club and sixteen of them have taken one or two pigs to care for. The contract between the club and the farmer who furnished the pigs shows the plans for raising the animals and caring for them through the summer. The youngest member of the club, a girl of eight, took two pigs, and two of the young women of the district who have been taking a teachers' training course in the Porter School joined and took pigs. The children followed the feeding instruction of an expert from the State Agricultural College, and were so successful that their fathers who were skeptical at first were converted and publicly announced their conversion and intention to apply the same methods to the care of their own pigs. In a single year the Pig Club has become a rival of the Poultry Club

in the estimation of the community and has generally improved feeding practices.

Porter School Pig Club Contract

The following is the contract entered into by Fred Conner, party of the first part, and the members of the Porter School Pig Club, parties of the second part,—

Fred Conner hereby agrees to furnish the members of the Porter School Pig Club with one or two pigs as is shown below, without cost, to be weighed, and picked under his observance, with the condition that the members will feed and care for the pigs from June 1st to any date between November 1st and December 1st (the exact date to be decided by the club members later), and at that time sell the pigs back to him. The weight of the pig at the time given to members will be deducted from weight at end of feeding period, and for the gain in pounds made on pig he will pay the highest market price of Kirksville.

The pigs Fred will furnish us will be registered Duroc Jersey gilts, which are not to be bred by members during the time they are fed and cared for.

Distributing Vegetable and Flowering Plants, June 1, 1916, Which Were Started in the Cottage Cold Frame

Fred will, when convenient, visit each home and note the care, condition, and growth of pigs, and if advice is needed or asked for, he will give counsel to the best of his ability. If any disease attacks the community, Fred will have these pigs vaccinated. In case of death of a pig Fred must be notified at once (that he may, if possible, ascertain cause of same).

In case of death Fred's loss is the pig and the member's loss is the food fed the animal.

At the time pigs are sold back to Fred, they must not be stuffed with food just before weighing. This might cause sickness or even death to the pig.

In case Fred is called to war, one of his brothers will receive the pigs back under the above conditions.

Curiosity, a passionate desire to know things, is perhaps the most universal characteristic of childhood. If this spirit of investigation can be satisfied for country children by giving them an understanding of the principles of things interpreted in farm terms, a generation of prosperous, progressive farmers will result. If this work is supplemented by teaching, which stresses the social significance of life, the evolution of the individual through the evolution of

the group to the realization of the best they are capable of, a permanent body of farmers will appear who will take their place in the nation.

CHAPTER XI

THE PLACE OF READING AND WRITING IN THE CURRICULUM

Because of distance, weather, bad roads and hard work, isolation is a comparatively permanent characteristic of farm life. Farmers need social stimulation in order to reduce this isolation to a minimum. But they also need a fund of ideals, information and interests to carry them through the unavoidable loneliness. Forced isolation cannot fail to be demoralizing if the individual has not a good stock of resources within himself. Besides the fund of ideals and ambitions necessary to prepare young people to undertake life in the country, a definite equipment is needed to enable them to cope with its problems. The ability to read easily and a knowledge of how to get reading matter is the first essential in this equipment. Books can furnish the farmer with all the agricultural information that he needs to keep up the best type of scientific farming. They also furnish recreation, ideas, food for thought, and a general mental life which is necessary to

every growing individual. Even a progressive and socialized rural community is so largely cut off from direct contacts with the outside world that it must rely upon printed matter. Therefore, it is very important that growing children should acquire facility in reading and habits of getting recreation and information from books.

The ordinary methods of teaching reading do no more than give a child the knowledge of letters and sounds, which will enable him to develop his own use of the tool if he has sufficient practice. Farm children see nothing at home to encourage them to get books or to form habits of reading. The school must teach them not only how to recognize words and printed letters, but the use and pleasure to be derived from a familiarity with books. The child must learn to understand what he is reading if he is to make any use of books in his out of school life. To be able to read with profit requires a fair vocabulary and the ability to grasp complicated ideas. Reading develops these qualities. Therefore, the first essential in teaching reading even to beginners is to teach the uses of books and that the idea is the real unit in the mechanics of reading.

At Porter beginners are not taught their let-

ters nor yet isolated words, for the teacher believes that too much emphasis cannot be placed upon the idea as the real unit. From their first day at school the pupils read simple sentences. Very brief sentences about some topic of interest to the whole school are written on the board. The teacher reads one to the beginners, pointing to each word as she pronounces it. Some one word reappears in all the sentences. In this way the children learn to recognize a word in a few moments. The sentences are copied each day and the teacher may use the same sentence for several successive lessons. Each word is written as a unit, but in reading the sentences the individual syllables of each word are emphasized so that the child learns to break up a word into parts just as he learns to break the whole sentence into words.

A series of lessons, of which the following is an example, was given in January to the class that entered school the previous October. The lessons were developed from the present of a box of oranges which was sent to the school. The children had already had some sentences and were given typewritten sheets containing the story as far as it had gone. While they were busy reading the teacher was putting a new sentence on the board. She cautioned

them once, saying: "If you think out loud, nobody else can think." After reading from their papers, they attacked the new sentence: "The oranges were sent from Los Angeles, California." One child asked for help with the word "sent." All the aid the teacher gave was to write the word "s—ent," and the child understood. Another one had some difficulty saying Los Angeles. The word was written "Los An-ge-les" and the teacher asked, "How many times do I speak when I say Los An-ge-les? Then when I say or-an-ges and when I say sent?" The class is allowed to group itself informally about the blackboard while one of these lessons is going on. They usually stand and move about so that they can see to the best advantage. They are always very quiet and remember that they are only one part of a large roomful of children doing a number of different things.

One morning on the way to school in the wagon the teacher had the little children spell some of the words to her. When asked for the spelling of "oranges," a little boy said: "I can't spell that word but I can write it," and he named the letters in the word correctly. The children were all delighted to learn that they could spell. Emphasis is never put on the mere

spelling of words, but a list of new words is chosen from each lesson for practice in reading, writing and sentence making. The same material makes both reading and writing lessons. By writing words as they learn to read them, the pupils learn to spell them without being conscious that spelling is a separate process.

The primary group learned the following words and read the sentences as part of a series of lessons based on the box of oranges:

Oranges, box, California, Mr. Howard, Los Angeles, sweet, sour, yellow, Wells-Fargo Express.

Children, the box of oranges is here.

Ora brought the box in the wagon.

They are nice, yellow, California oranges.

Lesson for January 21.

Win-field, did you eat your orange?

Lorena, was your orange sweet?

Glen, was your orange sour?

Helen, was your orange yellow?

Where did your oranges come from, children?

Do you like Mr. Howard? Why?

Because he sent the Porter school a box of California oranges.

They were such big, sweet, yellow oranges.

The oranges were sound.
Not one orange was spoiled.
Because they were picked by hand.
Each orange was wrapped in tissue paper.

LESSON FOR JANUARY 22.

The oranges were sent from Los Angeles, California.
They were shipped on a train.
They came by the Wells-Fargo Express.

LESSON FOR JANUARY 23.

They came to Kirksville by the Wells-Fargo Express.
The train came over the mountains.
It took a long time for the box of oranges to reach Kirksville.

LESSON FOR JANUARY 24.

Mrs. Harvey uses a very simple game in her reading and writing lessons. She will write a question on the blackboard, prefacing it with a pupil's name. Nothing at all is said if the pupil is able to read his sentence. He walks to the board and writes the answer. This exercise

arouses the keenest interest, but the class is always very considerate about giving the individual plenty of time to read and answer his question. When there are several questions and answers on the board the other members of the class take turns in reading them aloud and suggesting corrections or improvements in the answers.

Practically all of the reading and writing exercises for the primary group are taken from events that happen in the school. Very often the information which is given in a morning exercise will be emphasized by using words and sentences from it for lessons. A Washington birthday party furnished the material for the following lessons:

There were little square cakes covered with thick chocolate icing.

Some of these cakes had cocoanut icing.

Matthew and Lorena liked the cocoanut cake best.

Raymond, Helen and Winfield liked the chocolate icing best.

Mrs. Waters made the cake for us.

Because she likes to make little children happy.

Each one had as much cake as he wanted.

The room was very pretty.

It was decorated with red, white and blue bunting.

There were little flags back of Lincoln's bust.

There were two flags back of Washington's picture.

All the words in these sentences were successfully read by children who had begun to go to school for the first time that fall.

The children in the primary group read from four to six books of their grade and do it easily. There is no fixed time for the introduction of books, but they are given to the class when the group and the individuals in it are ready to read them; usually after they have been in school three or four months. The blackboard lessons go on from eight to twelve months, in fact they never really stop, as things of interest to different groups are written on the board daily and furnish a stimulus to the younger children.

The reading is further stimulated by dramatics, all the younger classes are given plenty of time to work out the dramatization of fables and stories. The primary group acts out such things as the fable of the Lion and the Mouse, going through the story several times in a morning with different children taking the

parts. The work is done with almost no coaching; if a child is at a loss as to how to express the story he is given a suggestion, but otherwise the work is entirely spontaneous. The shy pupils are asked to take a part, and urged a little, but they are never forced to, and gradually their self-consciousness wears off and they are clamoring for parts with the rest of the class. The stories which lend themselves to dramatization are read over and over with the greatest care by the children so that they can take their parts without hesitation.

Mrs. Harvey's success in teaching reading is perhaps what strikes a visitor as the most remarkable thing about the school. One cannot fail to agree with her that it is largely due to her insistence upon the thought back of the words. Children use books and read to themselves very little the first year, in order to prevent the development of mechanical habits of reading. By taking lessons chiefly from things that go on in the school room Mrs. Harvey assures interest. The sentences and words the children read and write are simply one way of telling each other or the teacher about the things they have been doing. A pupil is never told to hurry up, and, if he starts to read a sentence word by word as if he had not grasped its

meaning, the teacher stops him, saying: "Be sure you know what it is you want to tell us before you start." In this way she emphasizes the fact that reading is a real method of expression and communication. The children's power of expression is developed by reading aloud and talking to the school. The first reading lessons are conducted orally. A sentence or a simple idea is the unit. The child looks at the words until he grasps their meaning and then reads aloud. Accuracy and careful observation are insured by correcting any mistake he has made after he has read the whole sentence.

The youngest child in the school is just as likely to be called upon to speak during morning exercises as one of the older pupils. The class room is always orderly and the atmosphere friendly and informal. In a few weeks even a timid child learns to stand in front of the school and say what he has to say briefly and without embarrassment. If a beginner starts to hesitate and repeat himself, the teacher merely suggests that he stop a moment and think. The writer heard a nervous boy barely six years old with a pronounced stutter, tell the school without any hesitation and in coherent sentences the history of his flock of chickens. The oral recitations are a help to the

children in learning to read. People cannot read easily language which employs expressions and trains of thought which are beyond them. By developing power of expression and a vocabulary, the thinking power of the children is increased and with it their ability to follow more and more difficult reading matter.

The work with the older children is conducted in the same way. Formal reading lessons cease as a group acquires sufficient facility to read with little assistance from the teacher. The younger classes use school readers, but they are given to the pupils as pleasant reading matter: and often the same class will be reading from two or three different books. They read the stories to themselves as they sit at their tables and afterwards review them orally. The teacher will read a whole story to the class as they follow with open books, or two or three children will read a story several paragraphs at a time. Short stories are selected in order to finish the oral reading in one lesson. This prevents the loss of interest which always results in choppy, mechanical reading.

Once a group of children has acquired facility in reading, Mrs. Harvey spends no more time on reading lessons The books and papers which classes read for other school subjects

furnish ample practice. As they progress to more advanced work, the text-books naturally become more involved and have a more difficult vocabulary. Their power of reading, consequently, increases with their progress in subject matter. By this method the busy one-room teacher saves the time of the usual reading period and, in addition, the children are practicing and acquiring skill with material which has real educational value. Interest and skill keep pace with each other. Children who can read only in a hesitating and uncertain manner cannot possibly be as much interested in a lesson or get as much from it as a child who has mastered the machinery of reading.

Porter pupils get more varied experience in reading than children in most country schools. An entire class does not usually read the same book, because Mrs. Harvey realizes that stimulating the interest in and desire for learning is half the battle in educating country children. Besides the text-books that the law requires in every school, Porter owns a small collection of standard reference books and supplementary readings. Part of a class will follow the text-book, the rest will read about the topic in other books. In recitation periods pupils do not recite what they have read to enable Mrs. Har-

vey to tell that they have been paying attention; she requires them to tell what they have read so that the rest of the class will be interested and able to profit by everyone's findings on the subject. Very often a pupil will be asked to read aloud the salient passages from his particular text-book.

Learning to use the index and references in their books is a regular part of the work. Dictionaries, word books, and encyclopedias are constantly consulted. A pupil is made responsible for understanding any new word in what he is reading. If he uses the word during a recitation to the class, he is expected to be able to explain its meaning. Children are taught very young to find the place by page and paragraph numbers. They are sent to get books from the book-case and shown how to find chapters and topics from the table of contents and the index. Mrs. Harvey often calls attention in the morning exercises to interesting articles in periodicals which she knows are common in the homes. Pupils are encouraged to bring papers and magazines to school when they contain things of special interest or have a bearing on some project that is under way in the school. She lends her own books and magazines and encourages the children to do the same. She keeps

constantly before the children the fact that books and printed matter are useful for two reasons: to find out something that one wants to know either for help in work or as a matter of interest; and to furnish pleasure and mental stimulation in leisure hours. Reading must be constructive and creative or it may degenerate to a lazy pastime. Mrs. Harvey builds up constructive habits by teaching the real uses of reading. The children learn to pick good books for their recreational reading and they know as they read them that they promote their intellectual development and train their taste and imagination.

In building up habits of good reading the average country teacher has a great advantage over the city teacher: there are no bad habits to break down. Neither the children nor their parents read at all. The children will follow any line of reading the teacher starts if she enlists their interest and gives them a mastery of technique.

Reading is so largely an unknown accomplishment in rural homes that the school has not only to establish reading habits, but to contrive methods of getting reading material. The use Mrs. Harvey makes of newspapers and periodicals stimulates families to subscribe for them.

There is ample periodical literature in Porter to-day. But to get libraries started in the homes is a slower and more difficult process. The average farmer cannot afford at one time any large outlay for books. Once the desire is created, however, anyone can gradually acquire a library. If Mrs. Harvey had relied on the few books that were in the children's possession and in the small and rather technical school library, she would never have been able to feed the taste for reading as it developed. It was absolutely necessary, once she had taught the children how to read, to get books in sufficient quantities. There is no town library in Kirksville; and even if there were a new habit would survive with difficulty the delays and uncertainties of relying on this distant source.

With the coöperation of the State Library Commission, Mrs. Harvey worked out a plan by which the "Traveling Libraries" could be made to serve the children in the rural schools better perhaps than they had done before. She made out a list of books for a library which would meet the particular needs of the pupils of a rural school who were just developing a taste for reading and learning how to get pleasure and information from books. The commission was glad to make up this library and loan it to

the Porter school for a year, as an experiment in increasing the usefulness of their work. The following books made up the first library which was selected with special reference to the needs of the children who were to use it.

.....“Arabian Nights”
Austin.....“Standish of Standish”
Alcott.....“Little Women”
Alcott.....“Little Men”
Anderson.....“Fairy Tales”
Baker.....“Boys’ Second Book of Inventions”
Church.....“Odyssey for Boys and Girls”
Chapman....“Color Key to North American Birds”
Cooper.....“Last of the Mohicans”
Cooper..... “Pathfinder”
Dickens.....“David Copperfield”
Dickens.....“Tale of Two Cities”
Dodge.....“Hans Brinker or the Silver Skates”
Dole.....“Young Citizen”
Eastman.....“Wigwam Evenings”
Grimm.....“Household Tales”
Harte.....“Thankful Blossom”
Harris..“Uncle Remus, His Songs and His Sayings”
Hawthorne.....“Wonderbook Tanglewood Tales”
Henty.....“Right of Conquest”
Johnson.....“Her College Days”
Kaler....“Toby Tyler or Ten Weeks with a Circus”
Keller.....“Story of My Life”
Kipling.....“Jungle Book”
Lane.....“Hundred Fables of La Fontaine”
London.....“Call of the Wild”
Martineau.....“Peasant and Prince”
Mounton.....“Bible Stories of Old Testament”
Mounton.....“Bible Stories of New Testament”
Paret.....“Harper’s Handy Book for Girls”
Page.....“Two Little Confederates”

Parsons....."How to Know the Wild Flowers"
Pyle....."Men of Iron"
Pyle....."Story of King Arthur"
Pyle....."Merry Adventures of Robin Hood"
Reed....."Bird Guide"
Riis....."Making of an American"
Ruskin....."King of the Golden River"
Scott....."Ivanhoe"
Scott....."Talisman"
Seton....."Wild Animals I Have Known"
Stowe....."Uncle Tom's Cabin"
Thackeray....."Rose and the Ring"
Trowbridge....."Cudjo's Cave"
Twain....."Adventures of Huckleberry Finn"
Wiggin....."Polly Oliver's Problem"
Patmore.."Children's Garland from the Best Poets"
St. John—
"How Two Boys Made Their Own Electrical Apparatus."

The succeeding libraries have contained books of the same quality and the lighter works have by no means been the favorites. History and biography are especially popular. Mrs. Harvey has noticed that adults and children will read more difficult English in books of this nature than they will in fiction. Humorous and simple stories are the most popular fiction. The children do the library work connected with the loan and return of books. The books are loaned one afternoon a week and the child has the privilege of keeping books for the conventional two weeks. Anyone in Porter may use the library, but the children usually take the

books back and forth for their parents. The work involved in keeping track of the library furnished valuable lessons for the children.

Writing is another method of making contact with the world, which is almost as important in the country school as reading. In the average farm home, however, this means of communication is used even less than reading. Letters are written only when absolutely necessary. Accounts and agricultural records are seldom kept. The slight amount of writing that is necessary in the conduct of business and family affairs is usually considered a burden, is put off as long as possible and is finally done with a great deal of difficulty and awkwardness. Mrs. Harvey believes that it is a necessity for country people to be able to write good simple English easily before they can make the best use of their opportunities in developing a comfortable and prosperous farm life. Therefore, the school lays a great deal of emphasis upon writing.

Good penmanship Mrs. Harvey considers even more important than a knowledge of the rules of prose. Because, for children at least, without good penmanship there can be no real facility. Without the ability to form even, legible letters fairly rapidly, a child cannot acquire

the habit of writing. The mere fact that attention is called to his imperfect, mechanical performance, that he is required to copy and recopy and is constantly urged or scolded toward a better product will set up an antagonism and dislike to the act, which will prevent the pupil from writing unless he is driven to it. Just as in reading, then, the important thing is to start the beginner in the right way. Children five or six years old have not gained sufficient control of their small muscles to enable them to make small, fine marks or to handle pen and ink. Writing is a more accurate and minute process than anything they have attempted. Therefore, forcing a beginner to write small words on a small piece of paper means that he is straining untrained muscles to perform an unnatural task. Once these habits of muscle strain are set up, it takes many years for a child to acquire facility with a pen and, if he writes only seldom, it may never be acquired. Writing is so largely a matter of muscular control that the first lessons should be arranged very carefully to fit the muscular development of the individual.

A beginner in the Porter school may not touch paper or pencil for several months, although reading and writing lessons commence immediately. A pupil usually writes his name

or a word taken from a reading lesson first. The teacher writes a word in large letters on the board in yellow chalk. Then the child takes a piece of chalk and traces the word on the board a number of times. The teacher assists his first efforts by tracing the letters in the copy several times, his hand in hers. Then, he is allowed to practice writing the word on the board as much as he likes, provided he makes big letters. Writing on the board and making big letters enables the child to form a correct muscular memory of the letters from the start. There is no cramped position or strain to prevent the muscles from assuming the right set for the formation of each letter. The little children continue at the board for the first three or four months of school, the teacher correcting them only by taking their hands and helping them make the movements of writing. After a pupil has become accustomed to holding the chalk and writing on the board, he passes easily to a black crayon and big sheets of soft writing paper. Later they use coarse drawing pencils.

They keep on writing on big paper with coarse pencils until they have gained a real control of the process. This continues through their second year at the school and well into their third. As they write more easily and

evenly, they graduate from the big wrapping paper to sheets of drawing paper. The words of a beginner are often four and five inches high. Little children six and seven years will only get about six words on a sheet eighteen by eighteen. As they get older, the size gradually decreases. But even when they have changed to drawing paper, the letters are often an inch high. The letters are even and well formed, the lines steady, and the spelling, punctuation and capitalization accurate by the time an easy transition to ink is made. Not until the pupil has actually acquired a good handwriting does he begin writing in the conventional way.

As a result of using the very large letters until they are able to write well, the pupils do not get the demoralizing habit of having two handwritings, a rapid but untidy and illegible one for their own notes and rough copy and a laborious copy-book one which they save for show purposes. It is, however, necessary to maintain the standard which is set. They know how to move their muscles to write easily. Therefore, it is not necessary for them to labor endlessly to make a good-looking copy. Mrs. Harvey discourages the making of rough drafts. Pupils are taught to plan ahead what they want to write and the general form in

which they want it. Unless they get badly confused, they are supposed to have their first copy in such shape that it can be handed in. However, untidy, badly written copies are not accepted. Mrs. Harvey and Miss Crecelius constantly remind the children of the necessity of keeping up their handwriting by always writing as well and as quickly as they can. There are no penmanship lessons in the program of the school. They are not necessary, because every exercise in which the pupil does any writing is made a penmanship lesson.

The note-book work and Mrs. Harvey's method of teaching spelling furnish other opportunities for writing beyond those found in the ordinary school curriculum. Muscular memory is largely relied on in teaching spelling. Learning to read by recognizing words and then syllables as units might result in poor spelling if it were not reinforced by exercises which insure accurate observation. Writing words and sentences as they read forces the children to notice exactly what letters are used in a word, and their order. There are no rules about the number of times words or sentences must be written. The children write until *they* are satisfied that they know the word or that the handwriting suits them. In this way their attention

is not diverted from the essential thing, the learning of the word. In requiring pupils to copy words and sentences ten or more times the teacher usually diverts attention from the word, concentrating it exclusively on the number of times it must be written. The method defeats its own end.

Mrs. Harvey teaches the children the uses of writing and its purpose outside the school. In this way they learn not to shirk the duty of writing letters. At first the children were more awkward in expressing themselves in writing than in speech. Their experience had been so limited that it was not possible to expect much original composition. Mrs. Harvey first made the children familiar with the way other people write by giving them examples of good writing. Letters, addresses, editorials and short quotations were put on the board and copied into note-books. The first invitations to community gatherings were worked out by the school as a whole. Mrs. Harvey first had a discussion of what was to be said; then of its arrangement. Sentences were written on the board as they were suggested. Often several different letters were worked out, and the best one selected for use. But the children quickly developed to the point where they had things they wanted to say.

When this stage was reached, Mrs. Harvey began to encourage original composition. The following letter of thanks for a gift of eggs to the Poultry Club was worked out by the three oldest classes in the school:

"Last Wednesday was a happy day, not only for the Porter School children, but for this entire community, for it was on that day that the pure-bred Rhode Island Red eggs you sent us were divided among the members of the Poultry Club. We appreciate the gift because it will hasten the development of the egg circle we are planning to have here.

"We noticed how well the eggs were packed, and how uniform they were in size.

"There are now thirty-three members in our poultry club, and we are trying to emphasize just two breeds: the Rhode Island Reds and White Leghorns.

"If ever you are in this part of the state, we would like for you to visit us.

"Thanking you most heartily for the gift, we remain,

"Sincerely yours,

"The Poultry Club."

If the result is as satisfactory as this letter,

it is usually entered in the note-books, the teacher pointing out to them that they need never shirk or feel embarrassed at the duty of writing such a letter because they now have a model. Another year, each child in the poultry club wrote an individual letter of thanks for his setting of eggs. As the children had acquired sufficient ease in writing and expressing themselves each one could write a letter. These letters were written during school hours, but without help or supervision from the teacher. They were sent in the original form in which they were written. If a pupil asked how to spell a word, or if some phrase were correct he was told. The first of the examples here was written by a boy of twelve and the second by a girl of eleven.

"We all thank you very much for the fine eggs from White Plains. I started in the poultry work last year. I got one sitting from Mountain Grove, Missouri, and got one from Ruth Polley, for she had the pure breed Rhode Island Reds. I had a very poor hatch, and got two more sittings from the same places. From the four sittings I raised fourteen chickens. I have nine hens and one cock.

"I get seven eggs some days. I have six hens sitting.

"My brother Clifton is going in partnership with me this year.

"Thanking you and Mr. G—— very much, I am,

"Sincerely,"

"I wish to thank you for the Rhode Island Red eggs you sent us. The eggs were certainly nice, and they were packed well.

"I haven't set my eggs yet, but I am going to in the morning. We didn't have a sitting hen so I am going to get one from Mrs. Harvey. I first started in the poultry work in 1915. I had the Buff Rocks, then in 1916 I raised the Rhode Island Reds. I like the Rhode Island Reds better than the Buff Rocks. I wish very much to thank you and Mr. G—— heartily for the eggs.

"Sincerely,"

The note-books of the school contribute directly to the building up of permanent habits of reading and writing. All the older pupils own three or four thick note-books, which are kept from year to year. In one they put quotations which appeal to them in their reading or to which Mrs. Harvey has called special at-

tention. They usually copy into them everything which they learn to recite at community gatherings and they often add selections of other pupils which they like. In another note-book they keep letters and compositions. The letters form a record of some of the most interesting events of the school, as well as furnishing accessible models for use at home. The compositions are put in because their subject-matter is of permanent interest. Members of the Poultry Club have note-books which give the history and detailed records of the owners' experiences and an outline record of the work of every member of the club. Plans for coops and chicken houses and directions from the state experiment station are also kept in this book. The older boys have a book in which they keep a history of the school demonstration farm, records of their experiments in dealing with pests, information of all sorts regarding agriculture, which seems to them worth keeping. The girls have a similar book in which they keep much the same thing, substituting the information gained at the short courses in home economics for the more technical farm notes.

These note-books are among the most prized possessions of their owners. They contain records of the experiences which have seemed most

valuable to the pupil himself. No two note-books are exactly alike. Aside from the models for good English, classes do not enter things from dictation. Mrs. Harvey may suggest that a particular lesson or bit of information would be interesting for the note-books, but in general the pupils are allowed to use their own judgment as to what they consider of sufficient value to keep.

The relation of reading and writing to the curriculum takes on a new significance after one has visited the Porter school. Many teachers have developed the idea that since reading and writing are merely tools, they should be used as such, even in the school room. But too often this has resulted in poor technique. The opposite idea that form is the desired result to be obtained in school is more common. Even where the teacher has a pedagogical method which enables her pupils to gain control of technique this method fails, since it teaches only the how, leaving the why and wherefore to chance. Mrs. Harvey recognizes the necessity of acquiring skill in the use of any tool. The more important the tool in the life of the individual, the more important it is to have efficient and economical control of it. But in teaching the mechanics of reading, writing and spelling, she

never loses sight of the larger aim. People read and write for what it will give them; and in the average meager country environment it is just as necessary that the pupil learn what the things are that they can obtain from the mastery of these tools, as that they learn the mastery. Her methods of teaching technique are based on sound physical and psychological knowledge. Children are not forced to do stunts requiring the muscular coördination of their elders, and they are taught to read as they think, in terms of ideas. In this way technique develops with practice, as the children develop. Teacher and pupil alike have time to use reading and writing for their true purposes, learning things they wish to know. Here as almost everywhere in Mrs. Harvey's work, her essential emphasis on fundamentals is evident.

CHAPTER XII

EDUCATION FOR DEMOCRACY

If we expect the farmer to be a good citizen, earning a comfortable living and taking a responsible part in the government, we must demand that the country schools do their part towards this end. This does not mean that the child who lives on the farm should receive a different education from the one who expects to work in a mine or teach school, but it does mean that the country child has as much right as the city child to a training which will enable him to live in the world in which he finds himself, to understand his share in it and to get a good start in adapting himself to it. It is the business of every school to train its pupils to be successful as human beings and as American citizens. To do this it must take into account and make use of the conditions around it; the interests, the needs and the occupations of the families of its pupils.

The country school must become a real part of the active life of the community; it cannot

afford to go its own way, isolated and shunting off all outside influences. When it has reorganized its curriculum to make use of the environment of the children as the starting point of its education, it will succeed as a public school, and not until then. Practically all educators are agreed as to the necessity of this method of approach for any school, but too often the training of the teacher stops with the exposition of educational theories which, however self-evident and reasonable they may sound, are not put into practice. Instead of showing teachers how they may work out their own methods for applying these theories, training schools divide their time between teaching the theories, based on the needs of education in a democracy and practice aimed only at insuring the pupil's mastery of what ought to be merely the tools they use in acquiring a real education. The situation is not unlike training a lot of carpenters to construct a public building by showing them pictures of other buildings, telling them the uses and beauty of what they are to do, and then teaching them painstakingly how to manufacture hammers, chisels, planes, all the tools they will need for their work, but never showing them how the tools should be used in the erection of the building.

Many teachers succeed in working out for themselves the connection between their training in methods of teaching and the real purpose of these methods, but their success is due rather to their natural ability and interest in their task than to the school practices they are familiar with or have learned about in training classes.

Teachers should, of course, know how to teach the mastery of the tools of learning, the three R's, but the common school practice of to-day tends to establish the idea that the tools are the thing itself. We cannot look for the realization of the educational ideals which we preach until we stop merely preaching them and begin teaching them. Every prospective teacher should learn the meaning and the results for the class room of two ideas: First, that every school must be adapted to its own particular neighborhood, so that the pupils may gain an understanding of their child-world; and second, that what is to-day the end, reading, writing, all subjects, is merely the means by which she may lead pupils to the understanding of the larger world which they should know as adults.

While it may require the genius of a Mrs. Harvey to realize these ideals for the first time in the environment of our one-room schools, any teacher should be able to follow her. In

spite of the endless effort and thought that have so obviously gone into the creation of the Porter community, success is bound to follow an organic point of view such as Mrs. Harvey's. The ability to translate the usual educational theories into class-room practice unhampered by traditional methods is, of course, a requisite, but enthusiasm for her work and a vision of a new generation of prosperous and contented farmers will give that ability to the country teacher. Without this vision conditions in country schools cannot change very much, for the teacher must undertake alone practically every factor in the reorganization of her school.

The first problem which she must solve is that of her living. It is obvious to any teacher that Mrs. Harvey and Miss Crecelius could never have done what they have if they had merely boarded for the school term in Porter. Rural teachers must become integral parts of their school districts, and they must have more comfortable and dignified ways of living than are usual at present. Any teacher who works at her profession as more than a temporary makeshift can establish a home as Mrs. Harvey has done. This home gives her a position as a responsible member of the community and gives her the right to demand support for changes in

her school, which she can never have as a temporary boarder. Every time that a teacher wrests such a home for herself from an indifferent school district she is taking a big step towards the time when the state will supply teachers' homes just as surely as they do a class room.

With a home the teacher will have more courage to undertake many of the other tasks involved in vitalizing her school. All of these tasks force upon her the rôle of community leader. Her first step will naturally be what Mrs. Harvey's first step was—the rehabilitation of the school house. This requires either a large increase in taxation or the volunteer labor and coöperation of everyone in the district. To obtain either the teacher will have to gain the support of all her school patrons, and, when she has gained it and worked with them in making over the school house, she has established her position as teacher-leader. When new needs arise she is the logical member of the community to meet them. Her position as teacher places her above the personal and political complications of a neighborhood. It gives her the right of approach to every parent, it furnishes her with a club house and a group of workers and interpreters in her pupils.

Having made this start, the reorganization of the school and growth of the community cannot help following if the teacher takes her program from her environment. It is obvious that a community cannot be built up on a framework of artificial activities and organizations. Busy farmers and their wives will rightly have scant patience with a didactic teacher who undertakes to launch schemes which do not directly meet their needs.

The same situation holds for the class room, only unfortunately, the measure of success is more remote. Children are forced to go to school and it is only when we pause to examine farm conditions in general that we come to a realization of the extent to which our one-room schools have failed to meet the needs of the children who go to them. If the teacher wishes to meet these needs naturally and with the best interests of the child and the nation at heart, she will meet them as Mrs. Harvey has—that is, by making a curriculum from the *particular* needs of her pupils. This is the surest criterion for the translation of educational theories into practice. It is this fact that makes it possible for one teacher to do all that Mrs. Harvey has done at Porter. In making a real world of the class room, the teacher is giving the children the best

possible kind of education as well as creating a group of workers and a public opinion which will make possible even the most radical changes in the educational life of the community.

It is not the specific training of our rural teachers to-day that is at fault, but rather their lack of purpose. The theoretical training given in the normal schools to-day all points to the value of such teaching as Mrs. Harvey's. The point of view which results in the successful application of these theories will come not so much from a different kind of teaching as from a keener realization of the relations of education to our government.

In school the child is supposed to acquire the knowledge and understanding of our institutions and ideals which will make him take a conscientious and active part in the government. There also he should acquire the social and technical equipment to enable him to develop to the full his natural abilities. In America, public schools have developed to meet these demands. They are an off-shoot of democracy, designed to start every man on his career with the same chance. Until a country has come to believe in the right of every individual to rise as high as his natural talents will allow, educa-

tion is kept for the governing classes; schools are consciously arranged to keep alive class distinctions and to shut out the great mass of the people. The mere fact, however, that a country has free schools, compulsory attendance and a minimum of illiteracy does not insure an efficient democratic citizenship. Obviously, being educated is not synonymous with being a good citizen; there is no inevitable and automatic government which must follow good schools. The schools must be *good* for the ideals which a nation has chosen if these ideals are to be realizable.

The war has awakened a fresh interest and belief in democracy. As we have seen what a dictated and autocratic form of government can do to the minds and hearts of a people, we realize more strongly the value of our democracy. At the same time that we saw the necessity of sending men to Europe to fight for liberty, we saw the worth of teaching our children and our citizens from other countries the meaning of democracy in more practical ways than by fine phrases and catch-words. Winning the war in Europe is only half the battle, if we are not at the same time consciously striving to build up at home a method for developing our government and institutions along lines which will in-

sure the widest functioning of those principles for which we fought.

We have seen in this country that the tools for accomplishing a purpose come with the conscious formulation of the purpose, and they are not a necessary forerunner of the desire to accomplish. The bringing into consciousness and the formulation of our national ideals that has followed our entry into the war has done more to make us realize our power as a nation than could have been done in a generation by the most expertly imposed educational system. And already that consciousness of ideals and the desire to reach an end has produced results in improved organization and creative efficiency. Agricultural practices have improved more during the two seasons we have been at war than for years before, and even more important than this is the new understanding of the relation of the farmer to the economic condition of the entire country. The same increase in the quantity and quality of product has resulted with the manufacture of ships and munitions and all government supplies. It is true that this has been done to meet emergency needs; but that does not lessen the significance of the fact that skill and ability to do have developed simultaneously with the need, that is,

with the statement of our national aims and ideals.

American education has a big lesson to learn from this: what we need is not a certain system, nor a lot of new methods and equipment, but a direction, a conscious purpose towards which the schools shall strive. We can do no better than to take the path the war has pointed, that of educating for democracy. If we undertake that our own immediate problems will become so concrete that a child's school life will hardly seem long enough to give him all the experiences he should have to understand his own world. Conscious education for democracy is just beginning, and it is impossible to say what form it should take even for the moment. But there are certain principles which it must follow to succeed. The nature of a democracy is such that the concrete manifestations of these principles will vary with the time and place.

Until the awakening that came with the war, our schools suffered from too little planning and foresight. This was the natural outcome of the conditions under which they were started. They were the first concrete expression of the idea that all men are born free and equal, and were started to insure equality of opportunity for all. Therefore, they adopted a system which would

break down class differences and tend to bring the most ignorant and poorest up to the level of the wealthiest and most cultured. The aim was not so much to teach what would be specifically useful to the pupil when he started to earn a living as to give him knowledge and general culture which would enable him to hold his own as a citizen, taking an active part in the government of his own community. The country offered vast natural resources and the population was small, so that there was no need of technical training to equip a man to be self-supporting. Independence, initiative, and energy were more necessary for success than any specialized skill. Therefore, there was no pressure upon the school to adapt the purely academic training that had served the leisure classes to any more practical needs. The only knowledge that the schools had to give to insure equal opportunity was a knowledge of how to read, write, and figure; the rest of the school time could be spent on the luxuries of learning, scholarship, and the storing up of facts. This was the type of education that the ruling classes had always received; the new democracy purposed to give the best to every end and so very naturally they copied the system which had served the privileged few. Since they did insure the

same education, regardless of birth or wealth, and since they did stand for the best that our forefathers brought with them when they came to this country, they were preëminently suited to start a democracy on its way. But the schools of the country have not changed with the tremendous change in conditions that has come. Except in details and complication of methods the schools of to-day are what they were when our great-grandfathers went to them. Living and industrial conditions have, however, altered fundamentally; and nowhere more than on the farms.

The most far-reaching of these changes as it affects education is the fact that each farm is no longer a self-supporting and self-contained unit. There is no longer the unlimited supply of fertile land that made fertilization, conservation, and scientific methods unnecessary. Population has increased so that each farmer must do more than raise enough for his own family. Machinery, railroads, telephones, telegraphs, automobiles, and rural delivery have all invaded the farm, bringing a simplification of labor processes and a complication of social and physical desires. The old-fashioned farm produced principally to supply the needs of the people living on it, the little money necessary was

obtained by selling surplus crops. Each farm not only grew everything it needed, but did its own carpentry, blacksmithing, weaving, soap-making, etc. The children saw all these processes going on, and by helping learned how to do them. The meager curriculum of the school was supplemented by the richest kind of course in practical science and industry at home, so that each child received an education that not only gave him an immediate control over his own environment, but furnished him with the tools for going as much further as he wished. But the very agents that brought greater comfort to the farmer have done away with the necessity and with the possibility of each person knowing how to supply all his needs. The result is that the experiences of children at home have been tremendously narrowed, and the schools have not expanded to make up for this lack. Although our present industrial organization requires an individual to master only a few mechanical processes to become self-supporting, the teaching of these bare processes cannot be substituted for a real education.

The increase in population and the complication of industry have brought about another change which makes conscious direction of our schools towards democracy necessary. Not only

is it unnecessary for each individual to gain a rough mastery of all the ordinary machinery of living; it is impossible for him to do so. The simplest acts of our everyday life are so dependent upon intricate scientific principles, and so complicated by tools and machinery which we use to save time and muscle that one lifetime would not be long enough to master them all. When he add to this all the economic and social relationships which have resulted from our ease of communication and transportation and which largely make up the richness of modern life, we begin to realize the overwhelming number of facts and mass of subject-matter involved. No one individual can cover more than a small portion of the field. This has resulted in specialization, which is becoming more and more minute as industry and business become more dependent upon machinery. There is no doubt that specialization is the most efficient method for the production of wealth. But while it intensifies an individual's knowledge, it limits the range of his experience, and to that extent makes him less fit to take part in things outside his own range of training. It tends to separate into groups people who are pursuing like or closely allied occupations. Groups once formed, no matter how mechanical the reason

for their formation, tend to develop group interests, group ambitions, and gradually a feeling of class consciousness, which makes them struggle with each other, each trying for the dominant position. This, if it is not offset by conscious national aims, a realization of the relation and interdependence of the groups, and a belief in the dignity of labor and the right of everyone to a full development, cannot fail to undermine the foundations of democracy. The schools are the only place where it is possible to give everyone alike this necessary groundwork of social and democratic consciousness. They should be very careful as they alter to meet changing conditions, to recognize not only simple economic needs, but social and political changes as well.

The development of a democracy demands that nothing be done to interfere with the fluidity of the population: there must be no barriers built between different groups and occupations; everything must be kept as open as possible to promote free and sympathetic communication. This demands common interests among all the people; and the strongest common interest between people widely separated by space and occupation is the evolution of their government to the satisfaction of them all.

It is essential that the school, as the only instrument we possess for giving every one the same experience in understanding the ideals and needs of a democracy and their own parts in it, keep pace with the government's progress. Sentimental attachment to the "Little Red School House" of yesterday does not justify the maintenance of an anachronism to-day. Mrs. Harvey, by her work in Porter township, has proved that the plant and the equipment surviving from a formerly prized institution may be so utilized even in our communities as at present organized that the school may again touch every interest of old and young.